the paper for parents

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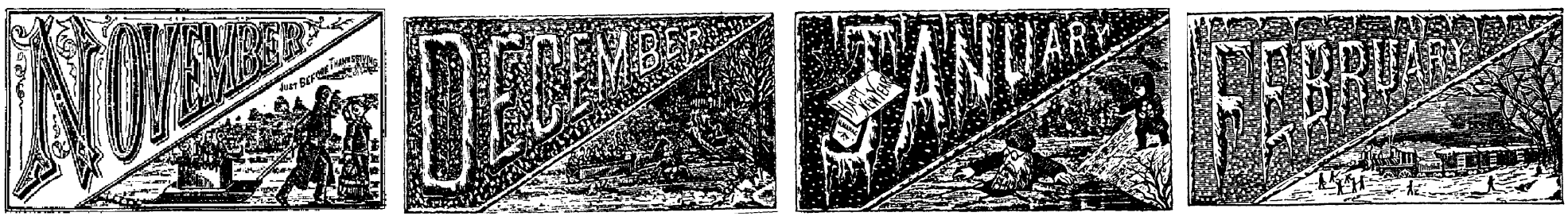



the paper for parents

ITHACA CHILD

Vol. XXXVIII, No. V
Winter ~ Holidays 2026



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On our cover...

Heading outside in the crisp winter air to go tobogganing is something I still enjoy doing. When you get a good run it's just so satisfying. While we don't really often see this much snow around here anymore, it's kind of like I just hope we get an awesome snow day at some point during the winter. Children around here are told all these stories of when we had the big snows like the 40 inch snowfall back in the early 90's. That one was crazy but it was also kind of fun! This cover just brings back some happy memories. I hope you get to have some too!

Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy this issue and thank you for reading *Ithaca Child.* Jim Graney, Publisher

Published by Finger Lakes Family, Inc., Jim Graney

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Schools/After School.....pp 15-16
Family Table/Dinner.....pp 17-18
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News & Notes

Updates and briefs from around the region

By Ithaca Child

Bake Cookies for a Good Cause

Join dozens of bakers from across Tompkins County who volunteer to help Habitat for Humanity put on a pop-up bakery that raises funds for the construction of more affordable homes. Habitat's annual Cookie Walk fundraiser is held on the first Saturday of December at Center Ithaca on the Ithaca Commons.

The Cookie Walk sells out every year – *many* bakers are needed to supply all that goodness! The more cookies Habitat has, the more funds they can raise to build homes. Student groups, faith congregations, and service clubs often enjoy baking together to support the Cookie Walk. Or just grab a friend and bake up a few dozen (six, actually) cookies yourselves! Learn more about how it all works at https://tchabitat.com/events/cookie-walk/.

Winter Holiday Events & Activities

Here's a sampling of winter holiday happenings in our area. Check the Event Listings section for more!

• O Christmas Tea: A British Comedy – Dec 2 at the State Theatre.
• Winter Crafternoon – Dec 3 at TCPL
• Photos with Santa – Dec 4-24 at The Shops at Ithaca Mall, December 4-24.
• The Factory Holiday Art Market – Dec 4-6 in Artist Alley at South Hill Business Campus,
• Wreath-Making Workshop – Dec 4 at Cornell Cooperative Extension

December 5th is an especially festive day, featuring community holiday celebrations in Ithaca, Dryden, Trumansburg, and Groton; more wreath-making workshops; Habitat for Humanity's annual Cookie Walk; stories with Santa at Southworth Library; holiday ukelele music and hula dancers at Tompkins County Public Library; and Christmas with the Celts at the State Theatre.

Throughout the rest of December, look for a tour of historical homes in Dryden decorated for the holidays; a Hanukkah celebration for young families at Tikkun v'Or; Ithaca Ballet's production of *The Nutcracker* at the State Theatre; and a variety of holiday artisan markets. Lime Hollow's Solstice Lantern Festival on the 18th sounds particularly lovely. Also for the Solstice is Cornell Botanic Gardens *Plants & the Winter Solstice* event. And little ones will love Lilypad Puppet Theatre's *Silly for the Holidays*.

Start the New Year Off Right

Check out these January 1st events to help you and your family get into a positive frame of mind for the new year.

• First Day Hike at Lime Hollow Nature Center, 10:00am. A fun guided hike along the trails, followed by a fire and hot chocolate. A family-friendly route option is available. Learn more and register at https://www.limehollow.org/hikes.
• Gong Bath at the Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, 2:00pm. An immersive, meditative sound experience led by gong master Caryn Sheckler. Participants lie down or sit while harmonious sound waves wash over them to reduce stress, lower brain activity, and promote deep relaxation. Tickets and more information are available at https://tcfa.squarespace.com/event-calendar/new-years-day-gong-bath-with-caryn-sheckler.

Safety in our Schools

By Indi McCasey, IPEI Executive Director

Schools should be safe havens where students can learn, grow, and feel supported by the caring adults around them.

Here in Ithaca, the safety and well-being of students and staff remain a shared priority. Learn more about how the Ithaca City School District prepares for and responds to emergencies in the recently-adopted District-Wide Safety Plan that outlines the district's intervention strategies, emergency response protocols, and post-incident procedures You can read more about the plan on this site: https://files-backend.assets.thrillshare.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/3594/Icsd/fdf2010a-b771-49fb-ae56-513cb3747d88/District-Wide-School-Safety-Plan-2026-27-%28Approved-Clean%29.pdf?disposition=inline

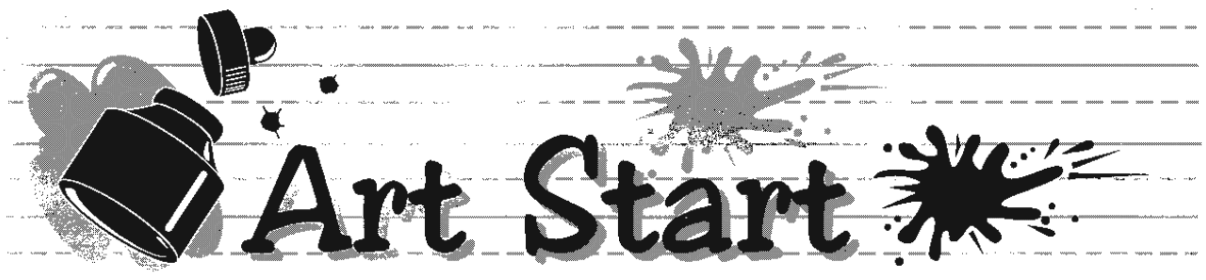
Submit Your Items to News & Notes

Ithaca Child welcomes submissions for our column.
You can mail them to
Ithaca Child, PO Box 242,
Etna, NY 13062
Fax: 607-347-4302
or email to jgraney@twcny.rr.com

KIDDISPHERE

This winter, Ithaca Child is pleased to offer you a wide selection of ideas for things to see and do. There are certainly some fun-filled, exciting and interesting things going on for both the young and the young-at-heart. Spanning the season from Thanksgiving to a couple week before Valentine's Day brings us from the first snows of winter and bare leaves of late fall to the depths of winter in Central New York. Our writers offer you a selection from the latest in picture books, finding ways to be living in the moment, helping parents become advocates, addressing the growing need for child-care in our area, recounting adventures in parenting and ideas for finding low-cost winter holiday fun, plus lots more including a special set of pages devoted to helping aging parents as part of National Home Care month. Check our event listings and announcements for lots of things to do and see.

We thank you for reading our paper and we wish you a happy Winter season. Sincerely, Jim Graney, Publisher



Healthy Happy & Engaged

By Cherie Gough

The way children spend their extracurricular time is more important than ever. Involving them in the arts and/or sports offers a much-needed release, social connection, and critical developmental tools. Read on to hear from experts about how these activities help shape kids brains, and what you can do to help them use extracurricular time in beneficial (and fun!) ways.

Art has a calming effect

"Art immerses you in the moment," says Alyssa Navapanich, an Art, Music, and PE teacher in California. Navapanich teaches her students that there are no mistakes in art. She encourages focus on process over product, which takes the pressure off meeting some pre-conceived notion of perfection.

"I like to build a sense of resiliency in my students," she says. "When they feel like they make a 'mistake', I encourage them to refocus, to see their creation differently and re-create their idea. The picture book *Beautiful Oops* by Barney Saltzberg is a great tool for teaching this concept.

Pediatrician Dr. Rachel Gianfortune agrees. "Being able to express yourself through any type of art helps kids process emotions and exercises the brain's muscles in new ways."

Art connects people

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the emotional well-being of each member of a family is closely tied to every other member—and parental calm is essential to children in times of stress or crisis. Creating art together is a great way to connect with children.

Physical activity improves mental health

Many studies have proven that daily physical activity improves mental health by increasing serotonin, one of the brain's "feel good" chemicals. "Giving kids a break from academics and time away from screens and social media improves mood and helps manage stress," says Dr. Gianfortune. Physical activity also helps children gain more confidence and work through emotions, as it stimulates the brain in different ways.

Ways to stay active beyond team sports

• kicking a soccer ball
• hiking and walking
• gymnastics
• dance lessons
• riding bikes and scooters
• golf
• tennis
• throwing a baseball or softball
• batting practice
• scavenger hunts

Music develops young minds

Don't underestimate the benefits of music as an art form. "Music is a powerful learning tool that stimulates brain patterns and memories," notes pediatrician Dr. Gina Rosenfeld, who encourages parents to sing to their infants and toddlers to help wire the brain in a positive way. Older children will benefit from learning a musical instrument and/or singing in a choir or other singing group.

Arts & sports enhance academic success

Making art and engaging in artistic projects exercise many different areas of the brain,
including critical thinking, problem-solving, and spatial relationships. "Children who are involved in and exposed to the Arts tend to be more creative and expressive, and are often more sure of themselves," says Dr. Gianfortune, noting that these characteristics lend themselves to improved academics and better mental health.

Additionally, children who participate in team sports or individual athletic pursuits such as martial arts tend to develop grit—courage, determination, and resolve—which can translate into working harder at academics and in other areas of life.

Ideas for creating art

• take a pottery class
• paint along with Bob Ross (videos available on YouTube)
• write and illustrate a comic book with a friend
• write a story and read it aloud in a video to share with friends family

Engage with music

• take lessons—voice, choir, instruments
• create rhythms with items found at home—drums, shakers, etc.
• listen to music regularly – try a variety of genres and tap, sing, or dance along!

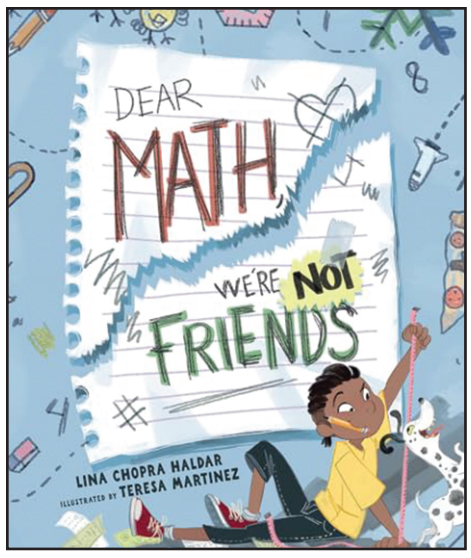
Cherie Gough is a freelance writer and mom of two teens. Find her on Instagram @cheriegoughwrites.

Reading List

Picture books to spur the imagination

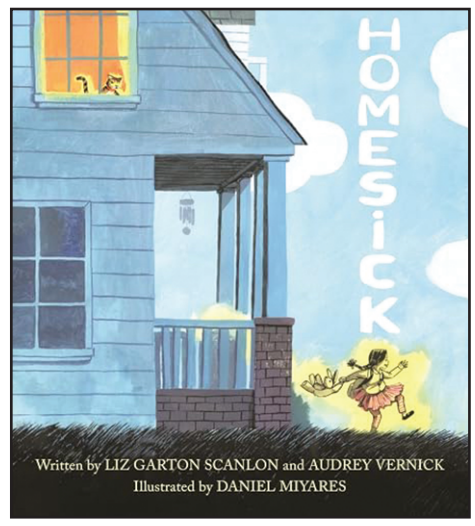
By Esty Schachter

Picture books featured this month explore a child's relationship with math, a first overnight visit away from home, a mother and son seeing an adventure differently, and a tribute to fathers.



Dear Math, We're Not Friends, written by Lina Chopra Haldar and illustrated by Teresa Martinez, is a delightful book about a boy who is uncomfortable with math and making mistakes. His teacher offers an idea, and Nikhil tries it, grudgingly. "Dear Math, We're not friends. I don't want to see you. I don't want to get wrong answers. So, Ms. Oates is making me write to you. She thinks it will help us be friends. It won't."

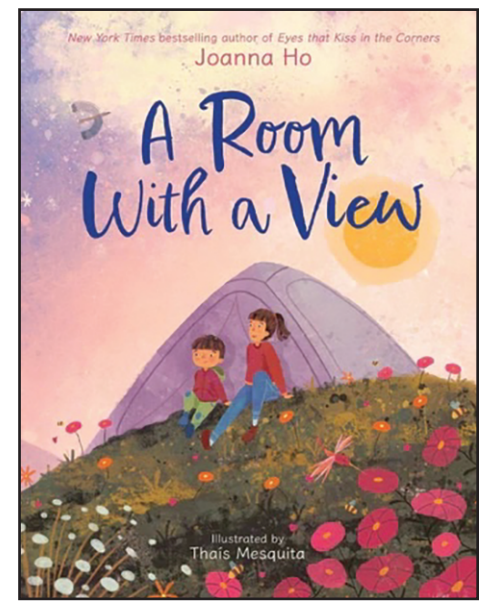
The letters show, in a highly relatable way, Nikhil's anxiety, as well as his gradual growth in understanding and embracing the math that is naturally all around him, strengthening his confidence. The story is told solely through these letters, reflecting an authentic child's voice. The accompanying illustrations are equally wonderful, full of color and whimsy. Haldar and Martinez carefully, joyfully show how Nikhil comes to recognize that making mistakes is how we learn. An author's note includes strategies for helping kids overcome their math fears. (Beaming Books, 2026, ages 4-8, or for anyone whose relationship with math needs a boost.)



Homesick, written by Liz Garton Scanlon and Audrey Vernick, and illustrated by Daniel Miyares, provides a fresh take on a child's experience of a first sleepover away from home and parents. Poppy is super excited to stay over at her Mimi and G-Pa's house, anticipating all the fun things they'll do, but Home feels quite the opposite. Home can't bear the quietness that takes over once Poppy leaves.

The book shows Poppy engaging in lovely activities with her grandparents, while Home feels her absence. Poppy makes it through the sleepover but wakes up a bit unsure. "There was a slide-down railing and a yummy breakfast and a jigsaw puzzle. But it wasn't…Home. Now Poppy felt hollow and echoey." Her grandmother thoughtfully comforts her, suggesting that she might be homesick, and that her home might miss her, too. Poppy agrees, and Mimi adds, "…it can help to remember there's a good home waiting when you're out having adventures." This bolsters Poppy's resolve to enjoy herself while she's there, and she's shown doing more lovely activities. "She liked knowing that Home was waiting for her at the end of it all."

Home has its own adventures, too, and they reunite in a very satisfying way. Gorgeous art accompanies this beautiful book about a childhood milestone. (Neal Porter Books, Holiday House, 2026, ages 4-8)



Joanna Ho's ***A Room With a View***, exuberantly illustrated by Thaís Mesquita, is a lovely exploration of stretching outside our comfort zones, accompanied by someone we love. "Oliver gulps when Mama shouts, 'C'mon, bud! It's time for an adventure!'" Mama loves camping, and Oliver describes what one of her adventures typically looks like – cramped, long, "shlepping a tent somewhere there might be bears and bugs and bats…and *sleeping* there." Mama always says the same thing: "Now this is a room with a view!"

Tentative Oliver prepares for the journey, and humorous illustrations show him decked out in protective gear, ready for anything and everything. They finally arrive at their destination and set up their tent. Mama is eager; Oliver is tired. Ho offers wonderful examples of Mama's delight and Oliver's dismay, which will be relatable to the equally doubtful. When he's about to tell Mama he's done with camping, he remembers the parts of it he does enjoy, surprising himself with quite a list. "Maybe adventures aren't so terrible. Maybe he can try again. Though some parts might not be his favorite, there are sunrise surprises and good morning snuggles, hiking-trail treasures and tickle-time huggies, goopy mud puddles, underground tunnels, fireflies, and starry skies, and…a room with Oliver's favorite view of all."

The final two-page spread of *A Room With a View* revealing Oliver and his mom is beautiful and tender. An author's note offers tips on protecting natural resources, adventuring like a pro, and a list of National Parks. (HarperCollins, 2026, ages 4-8)

Dad, by Caldecott Honor Winner Christian Robinson, is a nuanced tribute to fathers, acknowledging and honoring their individuality. Linking animal dads

continued on page 6

Family Fun and Recreation

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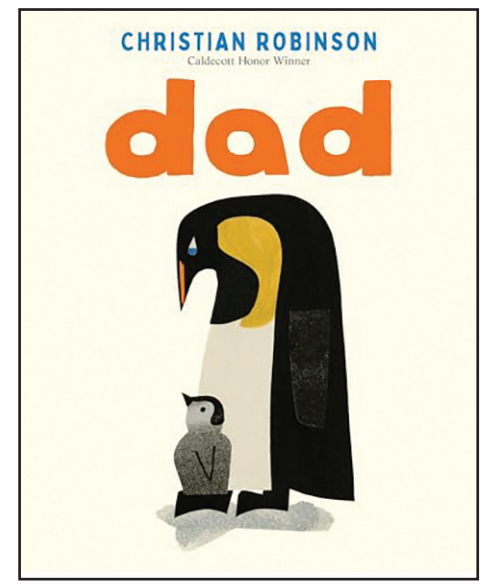
Reading List

continued from page 5

and their young in the beginning of the book, and then featuring people in the second half, what appears to be a simple book is in fact not simple at all.

Robinson explores so much of what a dad can be: dads can be strong; dads can be sweet. "Dad can be here now./Dad had to go away./Dad holds on tight./Dad needs lots of space." The latter shows a shark and his pups, and a note at the end explains all the different animals and their relationships with their young. Especially poignant and meaningful are the spreads showing how "Dad listens, and has stories to share. Dad wipes away tears, and sheds a few of his own."

Paired with a two-page spread of a child sitting under a tree looking at a photo album is the sentence, "Dad is with you even when he's not." This sensitive portrayal of all sorts of situations children may have opens the way for understanding, reflection, and connection. And Robinson's collage art draws the reader in, as always. (Balzer & Bray, 2026, ages 4-8)



Esty Schachter is a regular Ithaca Child contributor.

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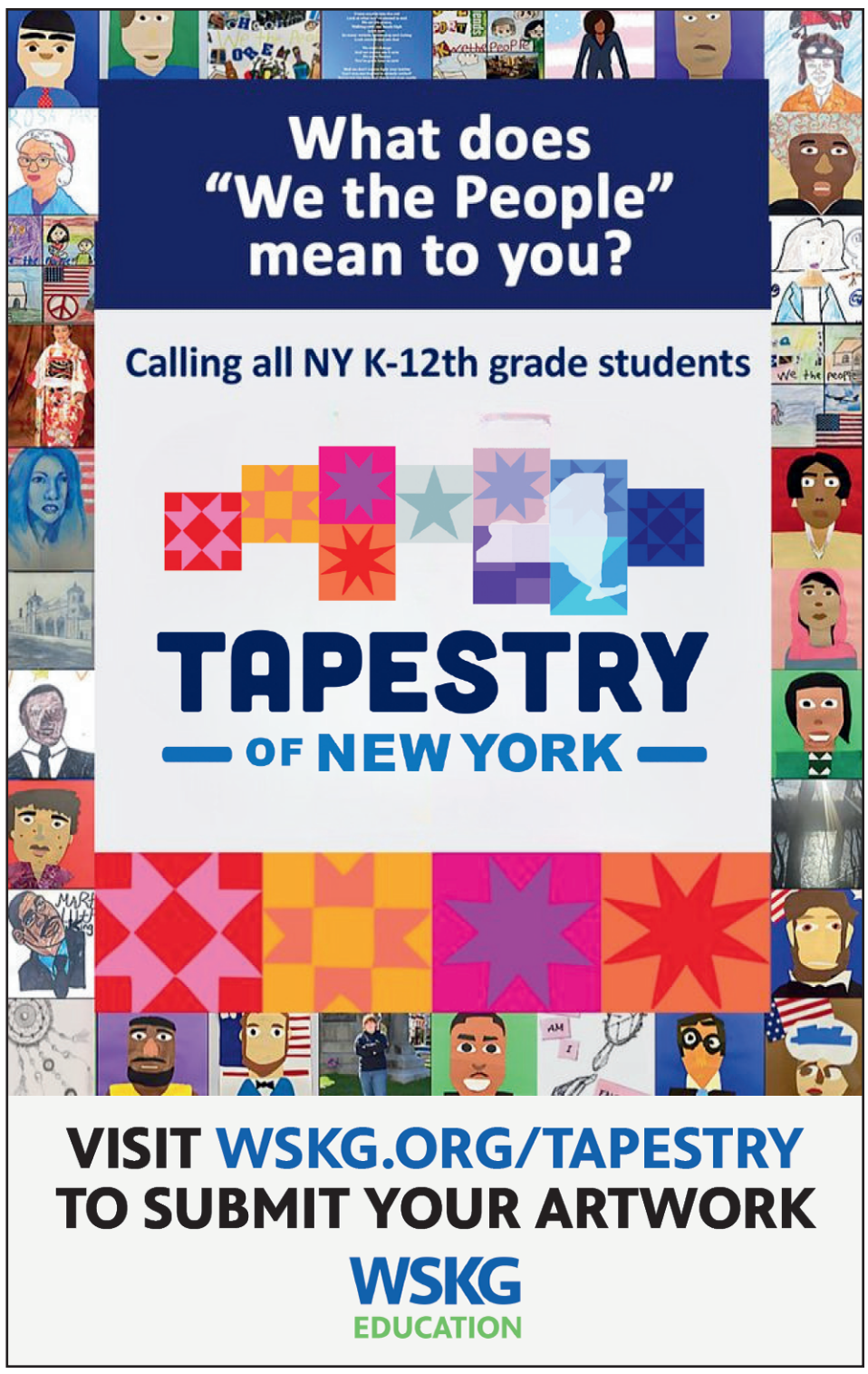

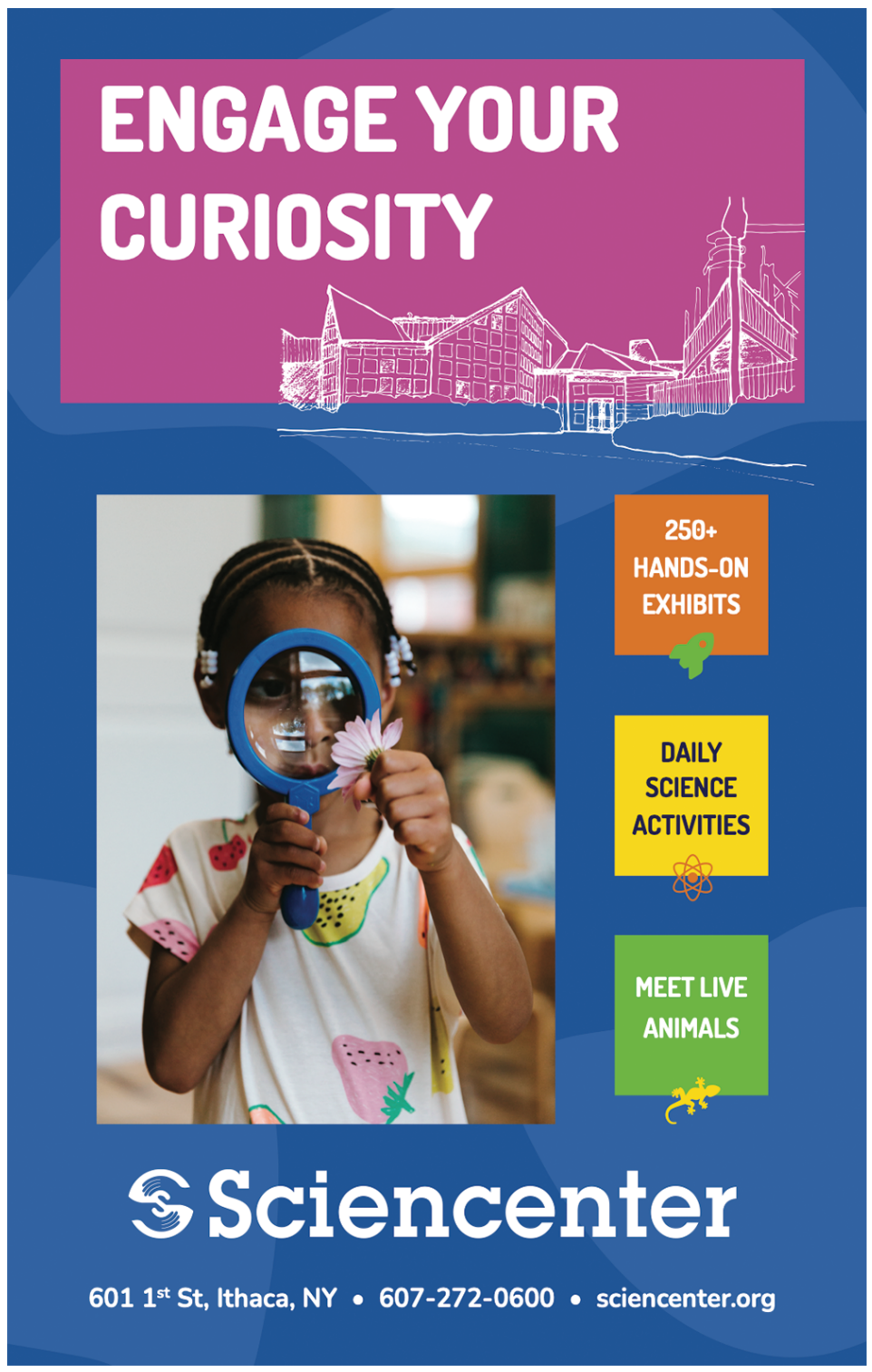

Living in the Real

Feeling vulnerable & it's alright

By Tricia Thomas

A few weeks ago, I was flying home after a busy trip and I stopped by a little airport shop to stock up on snacks and coffee. On a whim, I also picked up a Christmas home magazine to read. I've always loved Christmas. I'm the person planning Christmas gifts in July and putting up the tree the moment the calendar says November. For years, I meticulously decorated my home like a Christmas wonderland. Paintings, velvet bows, little porcelain snow figures, cute embroidered throw pillows—I did it all. It was my favorite part of the year.

But as I looked through that Christmas magazine, I realized my home isn't like that anymore. It looks about as different from those gleaming, festive houses as it is possible to be. Now, half-opened packages of diapers sit on end tables. Spiderman and a raptor are riding a toy train in the middle of the living room floor. The throw blankets probably have food spills on them, and in any case have been dragged away to make a fort. Anything porcelain or otherwise fragile had long ago disappeared from my decor.

What I felt in that moment wasn't regret—far from it. I love my little ones with every fiber of my being. But I *did* feel a sense of…something. I had the same feeling the next week when a repairman came to the door and the foyer was covered with Amazon packages, old socks, and toys that had been yeeted over the bannister.

Shame.

Oh, shame is a sneaky emotion. It's born of all the "shoulds" we caregivers lay on ourselves – we *should* make sure the house is clean before bed; we *should* avoid takeout dinners; we *should* keep up with the laundry; we *should* be sure to never let our house smell like exhaustion and dust. Guess what? I've failed at all of those. Not once, not twice—on the regular. When the repairman came to my door, the house probably smelled funky from the load of dishes in the sink. I was in sweats that looked suspiciously like pajamas (ahem) and my toddler had lost his pants…somewhere.

But it wasn't only shame I was feeling. It was also grief. And what I was grieving while looking at that beautiful, perfect magazine was the person I used to be. More to the point, I grieved feeling like I was in control. Put together. Good at adulting. Looking at those glossy images, I felt like I was failing some cosmic test of life.

Then, earlier this week, a mom posted a video that appeared on one of my social media feeds. She was a stay-at-home mom with young children, and the video was about what an "average" day looked like for her. She had a beautiful home, but it wasn't put together. Spills on the floor. Toys were picked up only to be thrown about the room again. Dishes piled up higher than the laundry. In short, chaos—the thing that we are all conditioned to be embarrassed by. The thing we try to hide in the closet along with the extra monster trucks when friends come over.

Interestingly, the only thing I felt after watching her video was relief. That someone understood. Someone *got* it. And it wasn't just me—the comments were full of moms and dads saying the same things I felt. It got me wondering why, as caregivers, we fight so hard to hide our struggles. Why do we think other parents—people who love their little muffins, yet struggle with the chaos—are out to judge us? Why is it that we crave understanding, yet hide from the very people who are best able to support us? What would it look like for our village to be made of true connection instead of "I'm fines"?

It's scary to be vulnerable. It's scary to admit that, once children come along, we can't control our lives the way we used to. But maybe that's not a bad thing. Maybe glossy homes and magazine pages can be a prison if we need them to feel whole. Maybe dishes piling in the sink and a toddler who can't find his pants really *aren't* the end of the world. Maybe the absence of porcelain snow fairies is a small price to pay for shrieking laughter. Maybe what we really need is someone to say, "Yeah. I get it. Me too."

Tricia Thomas is a regular Ithaca Child contributor

FULL DAY FUN AT THE YMCA

the YMCA

School's out? Drop your child off at the Y for a day of fun from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM! Kids will enjoy active play, arts and crafts, swimming, and snacks provided throughout the day.



SCAN HERE TO LEARN MORE!



Mark your calendar – Registration for YMCA Summer camps starts January 2027! Camp programs available for ages 3–16 years old! Contact the YMCA Welcome Center for details – 607 257-0101

The YMCA of Ithaca and Tompkins County | 50 Graham Road West | 607-257-0101 | ithacaymca.com

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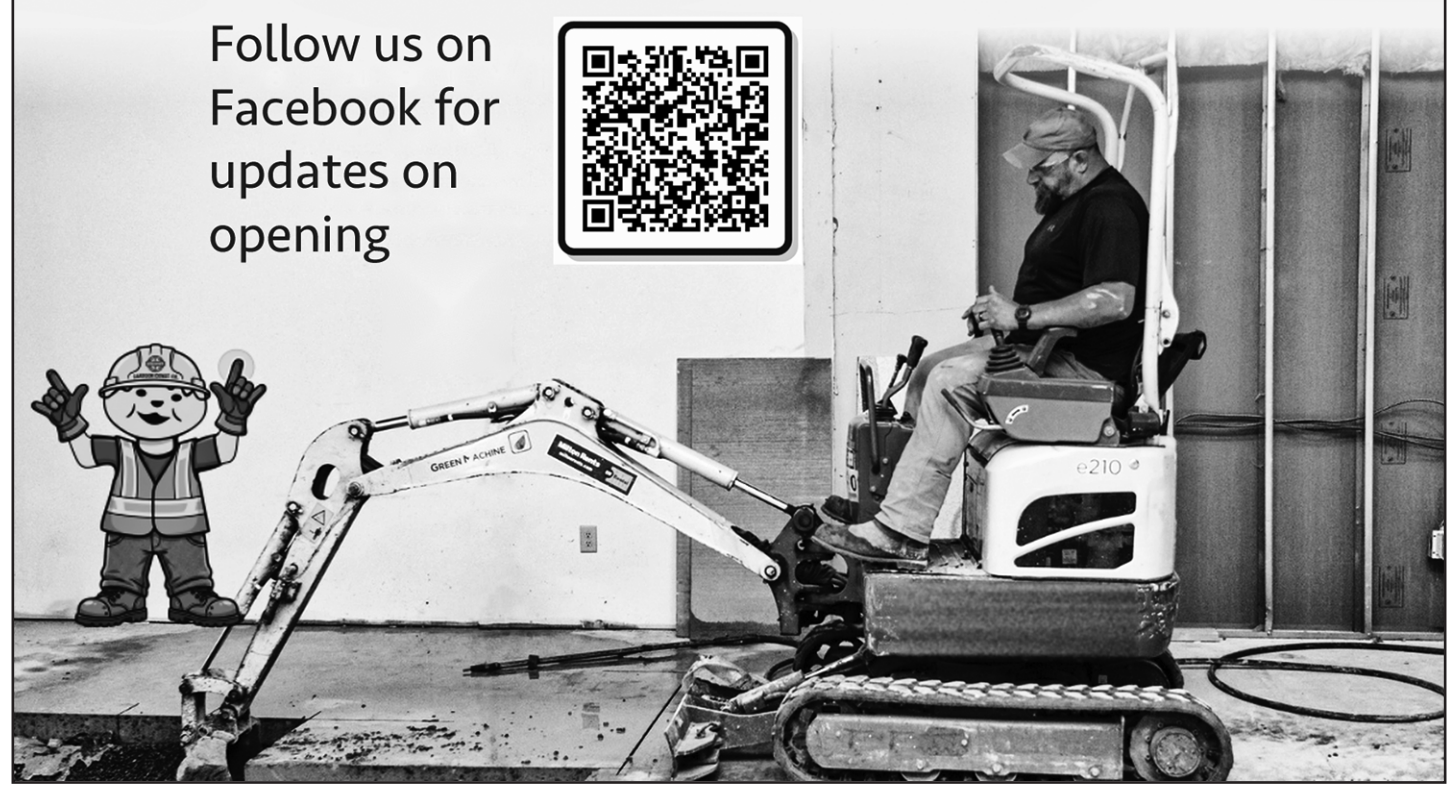

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Solstice Lantern Festival | Dec. 18 | 4-7PM
Stewardship Trail Days | Thursdays | 9AM-Noon
First Day Hike | Jan. 1st | 10AM

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Adult Naturalist Series | Saturdays

Introduction to Fire | November 14 | 9AM-2PM
Tracking in Nature | December 5 |9AM-2PM

Teen Apprenticeship Program

Our Teen Apprenticeship is a space that allows teens to grow their leadership skills through outdoor adventures, land stewardship, and community.

Local Announcements, Events & Programs

By Laura Rosenfeld

What's Happening?

Event Listings November

11 Wednesday

Singsong Music Class Series
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:15am. Meets four times. A fun-filled class for little ones and parents/caregivers to enjoy music together in a circle setting. Best for children ages 1-5. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/singsong-music-class-series-67031.

LGBTQ+ Youth Group
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Join us to do crafts, play games, and socialize. Whether you're lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning, or just trying to figure things out—we're here for you! Registration is *not* required; feel free to join us! Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/lgbtq-youth-group-61535.

12 Thursday

Family Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 11:00am. Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to celebrate reading and build early literacy skills with stories, songs, and hands-on fun. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/family-storytime-63223.

Story + Craft
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. A weekly reading and creating event for children. Join us for a read-aloud, followed by art-making or a guided craft. Best for children 5 and up, but younger are welcome with an adult to assist. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/story-craft-63289.

Ages 8 to 108 Board Game Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Are you between the ages of 8 and 108 and love playing board games? Join us! Just drop in and join a game, and meet our staff and other board game enthusiasts. If you don't know how to play a game, don't worry—we'll teach you! Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/ages-8-108-board-game-club-65388.

AI: Fact vs Fiction
Southworth Library, 6:30pm. Join SUNY Cortland Associate Librarian Hilary Wong and Gretchen Schoser of Schoser Talent and Wellness Solutions for a family-friendly conversation about Artificial Intelligence. Free books while supplies last! Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

13 Friday

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for crafts, snacks, songs, great stories, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Baby & Toddler Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Children and their caregivers are invited to join Cassie for music, rhymes, movement, and books. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/baby-toddler-storytime-67138.

Spanish Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Children of all ages and their caregivers are welcome to join us for songs, rhymes, stories, and crafts—completely in Spanish! Following the storytime, educators from the Johnson Museum will host a hands-on craft or activity that links the story to the art world. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/spanish-storytime-65948.

The Cherry Arts Presents: The Dog Poop Attack
November 13-22. An ensemble of actors in small-town Germany try to attract national attention with the true story of a choreographer who loses it on a critic. A dizzyingly "meta" reflection on the media, violence and forgiveness, and the tireless, ridiculous human impulse of creation. Schedule/tickets: https://the-cherry.org/cherry-events/the-dog-poop-attack/.

14 Saturday

Paws to Read
Southworth Library, 10:30am. Join the Cornell Canine Companions for an hour filled with furry friends, good stories, and a chance to practice your reading. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Study Buddies
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Study Buddies is for Ithaca students, by Ithaca students! High school volunteers will be matched up with younger students for homework help and general tutoring. Recommended for students aged 6-12. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/study-buddies-66785.

Family Tour: It's Made of WHAT?
Johnson Museum of Art, 1:00pm. Hunt for surprising art materials—from car tires to t-shirts!—during this free drop-in tour suitable for all ages. Info: museum.cornell.edu.

15 Sunday

Tidepool Touch Tank
Sciencenter, 10:30am. Get hands-on with ocean life! Meet marine creatures up close and learn how they live, move, and survive. A fun, interactive experience for curious kids and families. Info: www.sciencenter.org.

Draw-a-Thon Café
Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, 1:00-5:00pm. We invite everyone—whether you're a curious newbie or a drawing virtuoso—to come sketch, draw, and let your creative spirit soar in a vibrant atmosphere. We provide all the art materials you need, along with captivating still lifes and live models just waiting to spark your imagination! Info: https://www.tburgarts.org/event-calendar.

Meet a Reptile
Sciencenter, 2:00pm. Learn all about reptiles—and get up-close and personal with some of the Sciencenter's scaly animal ambassadors! Info: www.sciencenter.org.

Cayuga Vocal Ensemble Presents: Reflections & Radiance
First Presbyterian Church, Ithaca, 4:00pm. Join us for great music to celebrate the Ensemble's 50th anniversary. Tickets are pay-what-you-wish at the event. Info: www.cayuga-vocal.org.

16 Monday

Sit! Stay! Read!
Tompkins County Public Library, 3:00pm. Children are invited to practice their reading skills by sharing a story with a truly non-judgmental listener—a dog! Children who attend six sessions will earn a free book of their choice. Co-sponsored by Cornell Companions. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/sit-stay-read-52775.

Teen Creative Writing Workshop
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Love to write your own stories? Have ideas for your own characters and worlds, or an interest in writing fanfiction? Join us to share ideas, receive feedback on your work, and hone your creative writing skills. Meets weekly through December 14. Registration required: https://www.tcpl.org/event/fall-teen-creative-writing-workshop-66426.

17 Tuesday

Jennie's Book Club
Southworth Library, 10:00am. This month we're reading *Run, Rose, Run* by Dolly Parton and James Patterson. Join us for coffee and conversation! Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Memory Lab
Tompkins County Public Library, 2:00pm. Digitize your memories at the Memory Lab! We have: a book and document scanner, a slide scanner, DVD and standard sized VHS to Mp4 converter, reel-to-reel converter for 8mm and Super8 films, and cassette tape to Mp3 converter. Make your one-on-one appointment here: https://www.tcpl.org/event/memory-lab-67010.

Pokémon Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Ages 5-14. Learn and play the trading card game – we have demo decks and Battle Academy on hand! Do Pokémon related crafts. Meet other trainers and show off your collection. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/pokemon-club-64423.

LEGO Family Build Night
Tompkins County Public Library, 5:30pm. Buckets of LEGO will be provided for participants to borrow for their builds. Participants will also have the opportunity to display their creations in the Youth Services section for one week. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/lego-family-build-night-64450.

18 Wednesday

Aging Well Workshop: Building Brain-Healthy Habits
Tompkins County Public Library, noon. In person or online. Series host Cliff Carey will be joined by Stephanie D'Amico from the Alzheimer's Association to discuss research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement. Register at www.lovelivingathome.org or by calling 607-319-0162.

Family Open Play
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Willow Ave, most Wednesdays from 3:00-5:00pm through March 2027. Providing space, toys, and books for families to come with their children ages 4 and under to play and socialize with other families. Free; registration required: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2026/10/14/family-open-play-fall-26-winter-27.

19 Thursday

Kids Book Club
Southworth Library, 4:00pm. Featuring *Magic Treehouse*! This book club is for elementary-aged children, and will include a game and a craft. Registration: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Books & Brew Book Club
Hopshire Farm & Brewery, 6:00pm. This month's theme is Myth, Legend, and Lore. Join us to share what you've read! Need some ideas? Check out the display at the Library. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

20 Friday

School Break Day with Primitive Pursuits
4-H Acres, 9:00am-3:00pm. Ages 5-12. Come spend your day playing games, telling stories, carving, building shelters, cooking on campfires, and making crafts with materials we find in the forest. This is an all-outdoor, all-weather program. Registration: https://primitivepursuits.com/school-breaks/.

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for crafts, snacks, songs, great stories, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Chinese Bilingual Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Enjoy fun stories, songs, and rhymes in both Mandarin and English. Children of all ages and their caregivers are welcome. After storytime, stay and play—the Library will provide crafts, toys for exploration, free play, and time to chat. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/chinese-bilingual-storytimezhongyingshuangyugushihui-59823.

Grateful Tot Shabbat
Congregation Tikkun v'Or, 5:30-6:30pm. Celebrate

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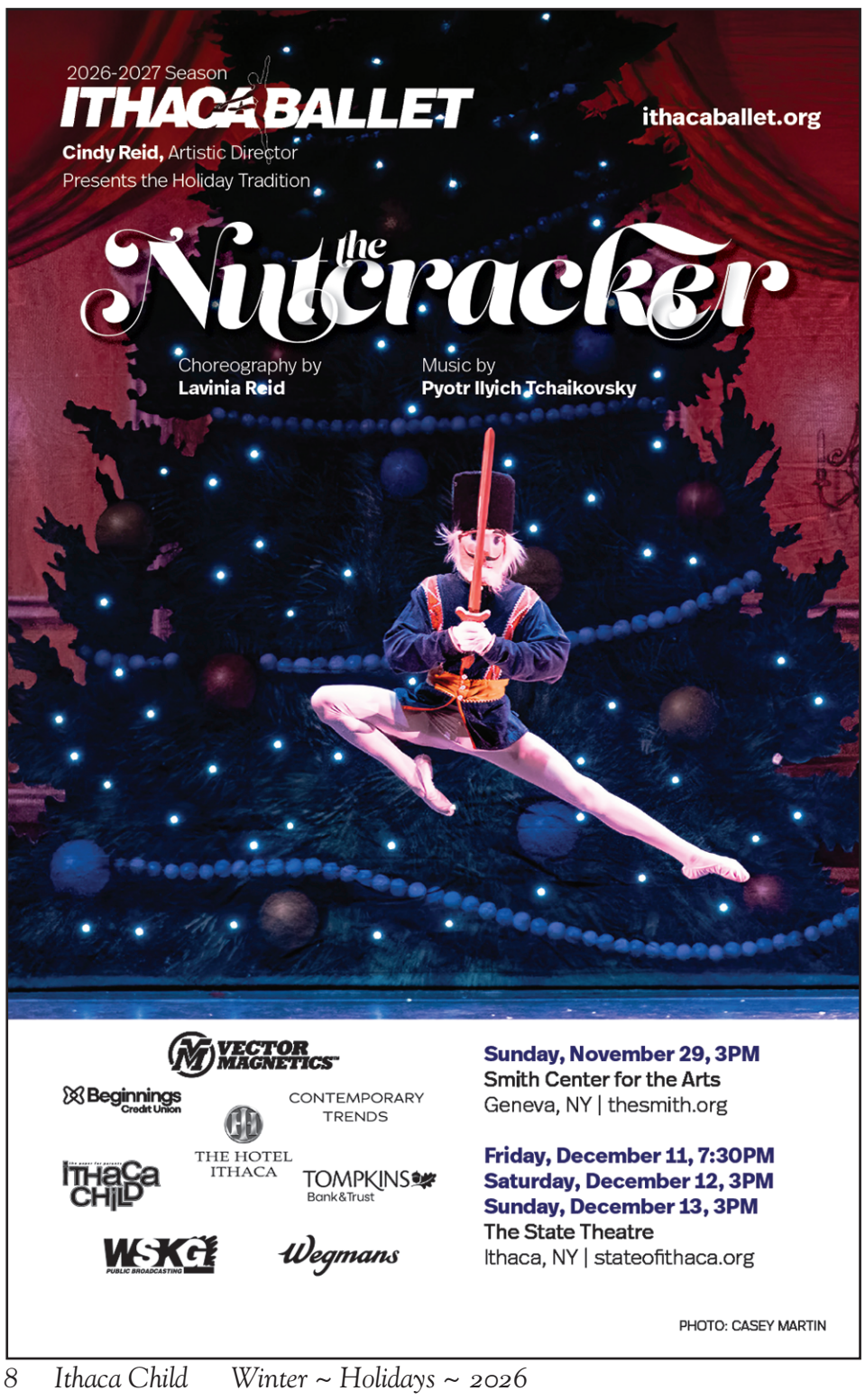



News Clips

By Allison Childs Wells

Holding Parents Responsible for e-Motos

When a child gets into trouble riding an electronic motorcycle, who is responsible? Authorities in more and more communities are holding parents accountable when their child is involved in a serious e-moto accident. Emerging videos on social media show groups of children illegally riding e-motos and performing dangerous stunts on busy roads.

In California, it is illegal for children under 16 to ride e-motos, which have a higher-powered motor than electric bikes. Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer has attempted to crack down on the growing problem, bringing charges this year against 12 parents who are accused of letting their children illegally ride e-motos. "I need to send a message in order to save other kids' lives and to make sure other parents are taking responsibility for their children," he said.

One child—age 13—lost control of his e-moto while driving recklessly at more than 40 miles per hour and crashed into a light pole, dying from his injuries. His parents were charged with child endangerment. "You shouldn't furnish your kid a gun not understanding what they might do with that weapon," Spitzer said. "And you certainly shouldn't furnish a vehicle like an e-bike or an e-motorcycle."

Source: *https://www.cbsnews.com/news/parents-children-electric-motorcycle-crashes-criminal-charges/*

Ultraprocessed Foods Affect the Brain

Recent findings published in JAMA Network Open suggest that the brains of children who eat more ultraprocessed foods (UPFs) show stronger responses in the reward network when viewing images of appetizing foods. Further, the research connects these responses to increases in body fat one year later. In short, the findings indicate that the brain may become more sensitive to food cues when more UPFs are consumed.

These manufactured food products include most breakfast cereals, packaged breads, and instant soups and are formulated to be especially tasty and convenient, with a long shelf-life. Often they contain artificial sweeteners, colors, and other ingredients rarely used in home-cooked meals. On average, U.S. children get about 67% of their daily calories from UPFs, which have been linked to weight gain, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

Researchers are still studying the role the brain's reward network plays. "Children's brains are still developing, habits are still forming, and food preferences are still being made. It's an important period where the brain is very

continued on page 12

FLTL

The Shops at Ithaca Mall
40 Catherwood Drive
Ithaca, NY 14850

Finger Lakes Toy Library

A Community Resource Devoted to Play

- A 501(c)(3) nonprofit community toy lending library with toys, games and puzzles for ALL ages!
- Stay and play or browse to borrow
- Sliding scale membership donation with NO minimum - everyone can play regardless of ability to donate!
- Offering Playtimes and Events
- Visit **www.fingerlakestoylibrary.org** to learn more

ALPHABET SOUP

One local toy store two great locations!

Ithaca
171 E State St
Ithaca, NY 14850
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Corning
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Corning, NY 14830
(607)-937-1700

AlphabetSoupIthaca.com



50 Cayuga Chamber Orchestra

Holiday Side-By-Side

Guillaume Pirard, Conductor

Saturday, December 19, 2026 at 3:00 PM

Ford Hall, Ithaca College

Featuring Strebel Youth Concerto Competition Winners



For Tickets and Info:

CCOithaca.org

with *CCO Youth Orchestra* and Ithaca High School *Chorale!*

Ithaca Child — the paper for parents

Tompkins County Tourism Program

New York State of Opportunity. Council on the Arts

Southworth Library

November 2026

Books & Brew

Thursday, November 19th at 6:00 p.m.

This month's theme: Myths, Legends and Lore

Read about Medusa, Achilles, Odysseus, or other myths and legends this month, then join us at Hopshire Farms & Brewery!

Jennie's Book Club

Tuesday, November 17th at 10:00 a.m.

Run, Rose, Run!

by Dolly Parton and James Patterson

Join us for coffee & conversation!

A new singer arrives in Nashville. She calls herself AnnieLee Keyes, and she has more beauty, talent, and ambition than most -- and a dangerous past that she's running from.

Silent Book Club

Monday, November 23rd at 6:30 p.m.

The Formidable Miss Cassidy

by Meihan Boey

Enjoy a free copy of this book or bring your own selection and enjoy some snacks and quiet time at the library.

Thank you for your service, Veterans. We will be open on Wednesday, November 11th.

HOME & WATER

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH AT NOON

A guided creative writing class in reverence of water taught by Tompkins County Poet Laureate nicole v basta

AI: Fact vs. Fiction

Thursday, November 12th
6:30 pm at Southworth Library

Technology should work for people - not intimidate them.

Join SUNY Cortland Associate Librarian Hilary Wong and Gretchen Schoser of Schoser Talent and Wellness Solutions for a family friendly conversation about AI

Free book while supplies last!

Bernard Carl and Shirley Rosen Library Fund Community Foundation of Tompkins County

common sense media

Preschool Storytime

Fridays at 10:00 a.m.

Join Ms. Laura and friends for crafts, snacks, songs, great stories and a giveaway book!

November 6th - Bedtime
Sleepy, the Goodnight Buddy
by Daywalt and Campbell

Children are welcome to come to this special storytime in their pajamas or bring their stuffies!

November 13th - Art
Programmed to Paint
by Mauricio Abril

November 20th - Thanks
Simple Thanks
by Deborah Wiles

November 27th - no storytime
We'll be closed for the holiday.

Each week families will receive a free book to take home, while supplies last. Thanks to the generous Rosen Library Fund Grant from the Community Foundation of Tompkins County. A special thanks to Clark's Food Mart for being our storytime snack sponsor!

Saturday, December 5th at 11:30am join us for **Stories with Santa**

Paws to Read

Saturday, November 14th at 10:30 a.m.

Join the Cornell Canine Companions for an hour filled with furry friends, good stories, and a chance to practice your reading.

Miss Angie's Music

Saturday, November 21st at 10:30 a.m.

Bring the kids to get their toes tapping and their bodies moving with stories and songs!

COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP

Made possible in full with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by the Community Arts Partnership.

Kids Bookclub

Thursday, November 19th at 4pm

Join Jack and Annie on a mission to the moon! They have to find the last "M" thing to free Morgan from a spell...

Please register at SouthworthLibrary.org

Southworth Library will be closed Thursday, November 26th Friday, November 27th and Saturday, November 28th for the holiday.

24 West Main Street Dryden, NY 13053 | Phone: (607) 844-4782 | www.southworthlibrary.org

Monday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. | Saturdays 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Announcements

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Shabbat with songs, stories, gratitudes, and crafts. For children ages 7 and under and their families. Info/RSVP: jennie.lavine@tikkunvor.org.

Moonlit Hike
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 6:00pm. Celebrate the moonlight with a brisk, guided hike to admire the beauty of Lime Hollow trails. The transition from day to night can be an exciting time to tune our senses to nature. Moonlit hikes take place whether the sky is clear or overcast. Registration: https://www.limehollow.org/hikes.

21 Saturday

2026 Christmas Tree Season: Early Bird Weekend
Moore Family Farm, Groton, November 21/22, 10:00am-2:00pm. Newfies visit the farm and pull trees from 11-2 on Saturday. Regular Season runs November 27-December 20. Evenings with Santa will be December 2, 3, and 4. Featuring U-cut and pre-cut trees, tree stands, wreaths, garland, ornaments, and more. Info: https://www.moorefamilyfun.com/moore-family-farm-christmas-trees-and-gift-shop.html.

Miss Angie's Music
Southworth Library, 10:30am. Bring the kids to get their toes tapping and their bodies moving with stories and songs! Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Study Buddies
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Study Buddies is for Ithaca students, by Ithaca students! High school volunteers will be matched up with younger students for homework help and general tutoring. Recommended for students aged 6-12. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/study-buddies-66786.

Crafts with the Cornell B.A.B.Y. Lab
Tompkins County Public Library, 11:30am. Families are invited to get creative together with hands-on activities designed to encourage play, imagination, and connection. Stop by to make something special, and learn more about the B.A.B.Y. Lab while you're here. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/crafts-cornell-baby-lab-66214.

Exploring Science Together
Tompkins County Public Library, 1:30pm. Children ages 5 and up and their families are invited to this free science program hosted by Science Olympiad at Cornell University. Registration is preferred: https://www.tcpl.org/event/science-club-65963.

Parents Night Out
Finger Lakes Gymnastics Center, 4:00-8:00pm. Ages 4+. Enjoy some time to yourself while your kids have a great time with us! Featuring open gym, gymnastics, ninja zone, highly trained coaches, pizza, and a G-rated movie. Registration: https://fingerlakesgymnasticscenter.com/pno.

23 Monday

Kids Artmaking with Laura
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Children ages 3-6 and their caregivers are invited to explore different art materials and processes each week. Participants will need an adult to help them and clothes that can get messy. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/art-program-wlalura-66494.

Silent Book Club
Southworth Library, 6:30pm. Pick up a free copy of this month's featured book—*The Formidable Miss Cassidy*, by Meihan Boey—or bring your own selection, then enjoy some snacks and quiet reading time at the Library. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

27 Friday

2026 Christmas Tree Season
Moore Family Farm, Groton, November 27-December 20. Evenings with Santa will be December 2, 3, and 4. Featuring U-cut and pre-cut trees, tree stands, wreaths, garland, ornaments, and more. Info: https://www.moorefamilyfun.com/moore-family-farm-christmas-trees-and-gift-shop.html.

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol: A Solo Performance by Neil McGarry
Auburn Public Theater, 7:00pm. A one-man telling of the holiday classic to celebrate the season! Tickets: https://www.auburnpublictheater.org/events.

28 Saturday

Study Buddies
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Study Buddies is for Ithaca students, by Ithaca students! High school volunteers will be matched up with younger students for homework help and general tutoring. Recommended for students aged 6-12. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/study-buddies-66787.

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol: A Solo Performance by Neil McGarry
Auburn Public Theater, 2:00pm. A one-man telling of the holiday classic to celebrate the season! Tickets: https://www.auburnpublictheater.org/events.

29 Sunday

Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol: A Solo Performance by Neil McGarry
Auburn Public Theater, 2:00pm. A one-man telling of the holiday classic to celebrate the season! Tickets: https://www.auburnpublictheater.org/events.

Ithaca Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker
Smith Center for the Arts, Geneva, 3:00pm. Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Choreography by Lavinia Reid. Info/tickets: www.ithacaballet.org, www.thesmith.org.

Teen Maker Monday
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Stop by to learn about and use some Makerspace machines! A variety of crafting supplies will also be available. This program is first come-first served for machines, materials, and assistance. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-maker-monday-66267.

December

1 Tuesday

Teen and Tween Graphic Novel Book Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. A monthly meet up for tweens and teens to socialize and talk about graphic novels! We read a variety of genres including graphic memoirs, nonfiction, fiction, and manga. We also like to draw and eat snacks. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-tween-graphic-novel-book-club-65097.



THE CAT'S PAJAMAS
Open Daily
DeWitt Mall • Ithaca
(607) 272-5582
Ithaca's General store For Kids and Kids at Heart.

2 Wednesday

Wednesday Morning Storytime & Activity
Barnes & Noble, 11:00am. Children of all ages and their parent/caregiver are welcome! Typically, the theme will be new each Sunday (at 1:00pm) and repeat the following Wednesday, but if you'd like to attend both, just tell your Storytime bookseller so they might find a new book. Info: https://stores.barnesandnoble.com/store/2122.

Kitchen Theatre Presents: Maytag Virgin
December 2-20. In this witty, charming romantic comedy set in small town Alabama, two recently widowed high school teachers become next door neighbors. Ca-

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Announcements

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sual conversations give way to neighborly conflicts and reconciliations, which eventually lead to a connection neither see coming. Schedule/tickets: https://www.kitchentheatre.org/maytag.

O Christmas Tea: A British Comedy
State Theatre, 7:30pm. Combining British propriety with an unabashed love for the unexpected, this award-winning duo steep an outrageously funny and brilliantly inventive show reminiscent of classic British pantos. Tickets: www.stateofithaca.org.

3 Thursday

NARCAN Training
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Join the REACH Project to learn how to recognize an overdose, respond to an overdose emergency, and administer NARCAN. This skill could help you to save a life. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/copy-narcan-training-reach-64806.

Winter Crafternoon
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Get into the wintry spirit by making your own gifts and cards! Join us for this festive drop-in program at stations set up throughout the Library. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/winter-crafternoon-65979.

Ithaca College Center for Theatre and Dance Presents: The Heart of it All
December 3-6, Hoerner Theatre. The biannual dance concert goes deep this season, coinciding with the launching of Ithaca College's first ever dance major. *The Heart of it All* is about connection—between people, and in our relationship with the natural world. Three distinct dances vividly portray themes of love and community coming together. Schedule/tickets: https://www.ithaca.edu/academics/school-music-theatre-and-dance/center-theatre-and-dance-productions.

4 Friday

Photos with Santa
The Shops at Ithaca Mall, December 4-24. Reservations are filling fast; book now to lock in a holiday photo experience that you'll cherish for years to come. Walk-ups are also welcome. Pet photos with Santa are December 7-14. Schedule/info: https://www.theshopsatithacamall.com/event/santa-photo-experience-theshopsatithaca.

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for crafts, snacks, songs, great stories, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

The Factory Holiday Art Market
Artist Alley, South Hill Business Campus, December 4-6. Featuring more than 80 artists and artisans, you'll find delightful handcrafted gifts, delicious food, live music, plenty of fun, and an art gallery to explore. Schedule/info: https://www.visitithaca.com/event/the-factory-holiday-art-market/10173/.

Wreath-Making Workshop
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Willow Ave, 6:00pm. A variety of fresh-cut greens, wreath ring, wire, and ribbons will be supplied. Bring any special decorating materials you would like to use to personalize your wreath. Wear casual clothes and bring pruning shears and gloves. This class is limited to 16 people; pre-registration is required: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2024/12/06/wreath-making-workshop-friday.

5 Saturday

Dryden Holiday Celebration & Craft Fair
Main Street in Dryden, 9:00-2:00pm. Featuring local artisan, craft, and food vendors, village-wide activities, and a tree lighting ceremony. Plus, the Historical Society is hosting an ornament workshop at Southworth Homestead from 10:00am-1:00pm. Info: https://drydennyhistory.org.

Antarctica Day Celebration
Museum of the Earth, 10:00am-1:00pm. Antarctica Day celebrates the signing of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, which resulted in international cooperation and scientific research on this unique environment. We'll feature hands-on activities and engaging exhibits including Antarctic fossil marine invertebrates from PRI's renowned collection. All activities included with Admission. Info/tickets: www.priweb.org.

Wreaths & Winter Greens
Cornell Botanic Gardens, choose 10:00am or 1:00pm session. Join us for a tour of the Mullestein Winter Garden, and make an evergreen wreath to take home. Learn about the cultural lore surrounding evergreen plants and the historical significance of wreaths. Savor some festive holiday treats and visit the gift shop. Registration: https://events.cornell.edu/event/wreaths_and_winter_greens_2026.

Wreath-Making Workshop
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Willow Ave, 10:00am. A variety of fresh-cut greens, wreath ring, wire, and ribbons will be supplied. Bring any special decorating materials you would like to use to personalize your wreath. Wear casual clothes and bring pruning shears and gloves. This class is limited to 16 people; pre-registration is required: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2024/12/07/wreath-making-workshop-saturday.

Downtown Ithaca Winter Holiday Bash
Three events, plus games, lights, and hot cocoa! 11:00am-2:00pm: Santa arrives with live entertainment, treats, and photos. 4:30-5:30pm: Bring the kids to the Elf Hop, a silent disco for ages 12 and under. 6:00-8:00pm: The Commons lights up for an all-ages Silent Disco under the winter sky. Info: https://www.downtownithaca.com/winterholiday-bash/.

Habitat for Humanity's Cookie Walk
Center Ithaca on The Com-

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JOHNSON
MUSEUM OF ART

Exhibitions now through December 20

Open Tuesdays–Fridays, 10AM–5PM
and Saturdays–Sundays, 12–4PM

ADMISSION IS ALWAYS FREE



HOLIDAY HOURS ONLINE AT
museum.cornell.edu/about/visit/

PAID MOM & BABY STUDY
MOMS OF 6-12 MONTH OLDS



EARN $250

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mood@binghamton.edu

Southworth Library
December 2026



Books & Brew — Thursday, December 17th at 6:00 p.m.
This month's theme: Foodie books
'Tis the season to bake delicious treats! This month read something that takes place in a Bakery or a story about a Chef, then join us at Hopshire Farms & Brewery!



Jennie's Book Club — Tuesday, December 15th at 10:00 a.m.
The Correspondent by Virginia Evans
Join us for coffee & conversation!
A gem of a novel about the power of finding solace in literature and connection with people we might never meet in person.



Silent Book Club — Monday, December 28th at 6:30 p.m.
The Mother Act by Heidi Reimer



All are welcome!
Enjoy a free copy of this book or bring your own selection and enjoy some snacks and quiet time at the library.

Teen Takeover — Ages 12+
Holiday MOVIE NIGHT
Friday, December 18th 6:30pm
FREE Pizza!!
Please register at SouthworthLibrary.org

Stories with Santa
Saturday, December 5th at 11:30am





- FREE copy of *Santa's First Christmas* by Mac Barnett*
- Photos with Santa
- Make an edible gnome!
- Make a gnome bookmark
- Crafts, games & snacks*

Bernard Carl and Shirley Rosen Library Fund Community Foundation of Tompkins County
*while supplies last





Preschool Storytime
Fridays at 10:00 a.m.
Join Ms. Laura, Ms. Jess and friends for crafts, snacks, songs, great stories and a giveaway book!

December 4th
Woo Hoo! You're Doing Great! by Sandra Boynton



December 11th - Senses
I Hear the Snow, I Smell the Sea by Janice Milusich



December 18th - Holidays!
We're going on an elf hunt by Clare Fennell



December 25th - no storytime

Each week families will receive a free book to take home, while supplies last. Thanks to the generous Rosen Library Fund Grant from the Community Foundation of Tompkins County. A special thanks to Clark's Food Mart for being our storytime snack sponsor!

Paws to Read
Saturday, December 12th at 10:30 a.m.
Join the Cornell Canine Companions for an hour filled with furry friends, good stories, and a chance to practice your reading.



Miss Angie's Music
Saturday, December 19th at 10:30 a.m.
Bring the kids to get their toes tapping and their bodies moving with stories and songs!
Community Arts Partnership
Made possible in full with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by the Community Arts Partnership.

WINTER PUPPET SHOW
Silly for the Holidays!



Wednesday, December 30th at 2:30pm
LilypadPuppetTheatre.org

SORRY! WE'RE CLOSED

Southworth Library will be closed
Thursday, December 24th
Friday, December 25th
Thursday, December 30th and
January 1st for the holidays.

Southworth Library will be closed Thursday, December 24th
Friday December 25th Thursday, December 30th and January 1st for the holidays

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News Clips

continued from page 9

sensitive to food and the food environment," said the study's senior author, Dr. Kathleen A. Page, adding, "We're particularly interested in understanding these processes in children, because we believe that intervening early could make a real difference."

Source: https://medicalxpress.com/news/2026-10-children-ultraprocessed-foods-stronger-brain.html

Unvaccinated Children at Risk for Household Hepatitis B

Basing hepatitis B virus (HBV) vaccination recommendations for infants solely on the birth mother's HBV status leaves children vulnerable to infection from other close contacts—including household members who may carry the virus. "A child can be exposed to hepatitis B from anyone with an active infection, not just their mother," says Dr. Karen B. Jacobson, an infectious disease physician and research scientist. "No one knows the status of everyone a child may come into contact with, and vaccinating infants at birth protects against known and unknown potential sources of transmission. The hepatitis B vaccine is a safe and effective way to protect against HBV infection."

In January 2025, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention changed its HBV vaccination guidance. Previously, the recommendation was for all infants to be vaccinated at birth. The new recommendation specifies vaccination should be only for infants whose mothers have unknown or active HBV status. But HBV can be transmitted after birth through contact with body fluids including blood, tears, and saliva. And the virus can live on environmental surfaces for up to a week. Therefore, anyone who shares a household with a person with active HBV is at high risk of infection. "Our findings underscore the importance of universal hepatitis B vaccination at birth," said Jacobson.

Currently, some 640,000 U.S. adults live with chronic hepatitis B. When infected early in life, 90% of infants will develop chronic hepatitis B, resulting in possible lifelong complications that include cirrhosis and liver cancer.

Source: https://divisionofresearch.kaiserpermanente.org/household-hepb-unvaccinated-risk/

Movement and Autism

Do children really need to sit still to learn? Could making room for movement help? Research on autistic children suggests that physical activity may support some learning skills. Finding the right type and amount of movement is key.

Researchers have explored how physical activity may affect self-regulation, executive functioning, and classroom participation, helping us understand how movement supports a child's readiness to participate in learning. Some studies examine movement before learning, while others explore movement during cognitive tasks. Together, research on aerobic exercise, cycling, sensory-motor activities, and movement-based video games offers promising insights into how different movement experiences may support different skills.

One study, for example, compared learning to ride a bicycle, stationary cycling, and walking. The group of children who learned to ride a bicycle showed improved thinking skills, including cognitive flexibility and inhibition. And both cycling groups significantly enhanced their self-regulation. These are abilities that help children learn and participate in everyday activities.

Movement gives children information about their bodies. Proprioception helps us sense body position and movement, while the vestibular system helps us sense head movement and balance. Training in these areas has been shown to significantly reduce hyperactivity and impulsivity while improving sensory processing and modulation, as well as behavior and emotional response.

The top takeaway? Regulation does not always mean being quiet or sitting still. The goal is to help children feel ready and supported to participate. Instead of focusing on stillness, we can ask: What helps this child engage and show what they know?

Source: https://autismspectrumnews.org/does-movement-help-autistic-children-learn-what-the-research-tells-us/

Allison Childs Wells is a regular Ithaca Child contributor.

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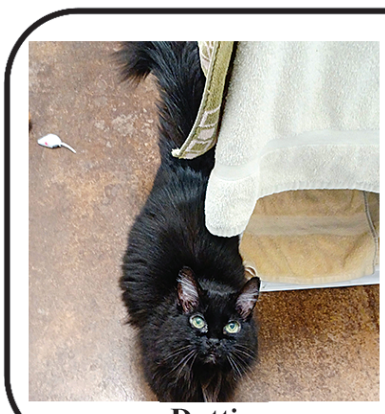

Dottie

At thirteen years of age, Dottie's learned the value of quiet companionship and good conversation. She's more than happy to let you know when she'd appreciate your attention with a hearty 'meow', and is a very big fan of being gently brushed. She is well-behaved and isn't destructive of things in her home. She also has experience living with other cats. Let's see if she's the purrfect fit for your home! Drop by during our open hours of noon to 4:30pm Wed – Sundays (6:30pm on Thursdays) and get to know this wonderful gal for yourself!



Brownie

Who doesn't love brownies? Except ours really is the best, because he's super sweet and is a gent on the leash! Don't be fooled by his "serious thinker face" – Brownie's got a uniquely goofy play style, and feels at home with human friends or other canine pals. He's always more than happy to spend time with either one. We just can't wait for you to fall in love with him, too!

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Senior Care

For Seniors and Their Adult Children Around Tompkins County

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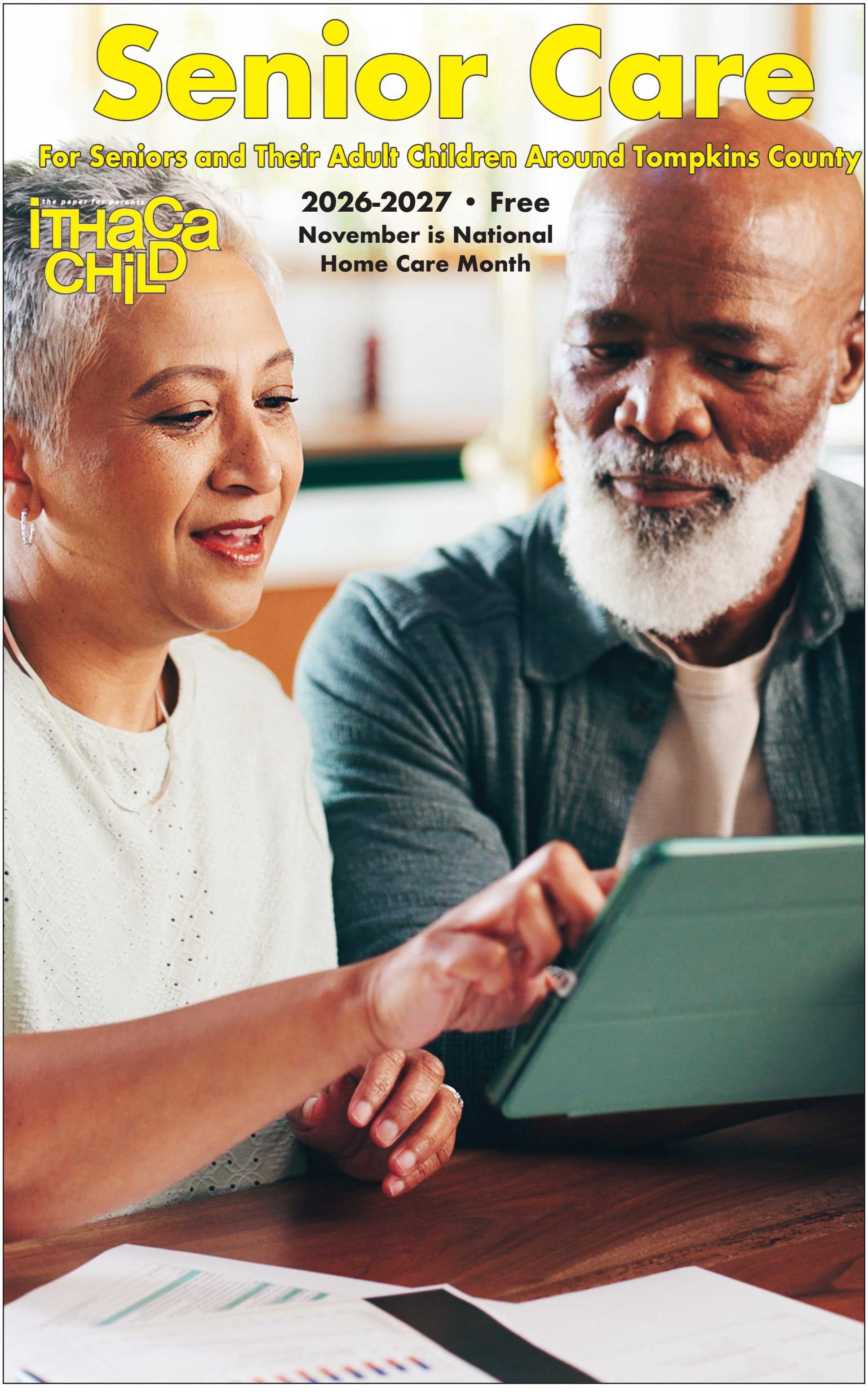

Introduction

From the Publisher, Jim Graney

Welcome to the twenty-second annual *Senior Care* supplement published by Finger Lakes Family, Inc. through *Ithaca Child, The Paper for Parents*. This supplement is designed to give both Senior Citizens and their adult caregivers information on many aspects of daily living. The phrase "the Sandwich Generation" describes many families in today's society: families raising children and assisting with the care of their aging parents or other elderly loved ones. A process with difficulties componed by global and economic situations. Many adults who are offering care either directly or indirectly to their aging parents, often have children of their own. Keeping sight on the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is an important part of helping seniors feel young and connected to their families.

As the publisher, I understand on a very personal level what the issue of Senior Care is all about. While never easy, it seems critical to remember that all life ends. What we can do is to try and make the end something that brings a peaceful closure and offers a positive reflection back on the process of loss. Not everyone can have a pleasant end to their life. For those of us who remain, we can only hope that we have been able to do all we could to make the time leading up to a person's passing as smooth as possible.

There are many issues to take into consideration when providing care for Seniors: housing, medical care, financial planning, navigating the many available services, learning about benefits, insurance, and payment options. *Senior Care* is designed to be a valuable resource for families. Life is about relationships: creating them, building them, and sustaining them. Often when a family faces the struggle of caring for both aging parents and children, it is a time of transition, change, and decision making. Families that face the daily challenges of caregiving often need guidance and information to ensure positive and beneficial family functioning. With that goal in mind, *Senior Care* wishes you well in your journey.

Jim Graney is the Publisher of Ithaca Child, The Paper for Parents.

Generational Memories

How my children will know the grandmother they'll never meet

By Gina Rich

"Mama, it's not fair that I won't ever get to meet Grandma Kate."

This comment from my second grader punctured me right in the heart. My mother passed away several years before my children were born, but I can easily picture exactly the type of grandmother she would have been: doting, playful, and fond of sharing silly jokes.

For a while, I didn't know how to respond when my kids wanted to talk about my mom, but I've come to realize that I can still help my daughters to know their grandmother, even though they'll never meet her. Here's how:

Through storytelling

When my oldest daughter was five, she started collecting stories about her grandmother. It all began when I showed her some photos of my mom. The more I shared with my daughter, the more she wanted to know. Soon it became part of our usual bedtime routine. After a book, I'd turn off the lights and wait quietly for her question: "Mama, can I have a Grandma Kate story?"

We've talked about how my parents first met: My mom struck up a conversation with my dad at a party because she thought he looked lonely. I've shared stories from my mother's childhood, like how she loved to fall asleep on the couch and how she always worried that her older brother was going to erase her homework. There have been tales of dramatic injuries, like the day my sister was in a scary sledding accident and my mom handled the situation so calmly that the doctors mistakenly assumed she was a nurse. My mother had a great sense of humor, so I've also made sure to share some of the funny things she did over the years, like making us kids a silly breakfast on April Fool's Day.

Through artifacts

Several possessions that originated with my mother now reside with me, and each has its own story. At first, I kept these items hidden away in my closet, but over time they have found a new place in my daughters' lives. The striped

continued on Senior Care page 4



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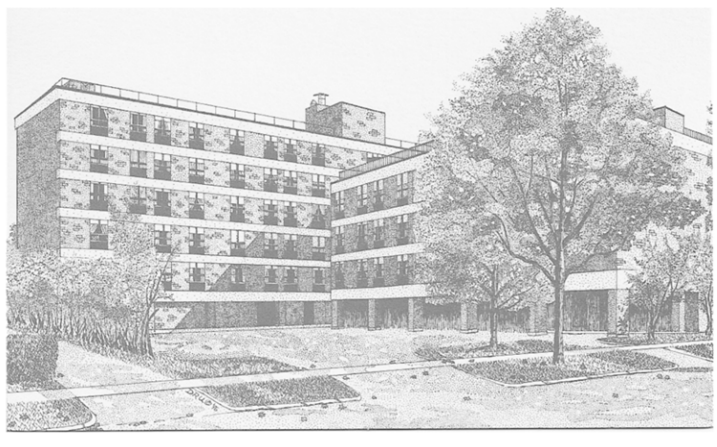

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the paper for parents
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Senior Care

For Seniors and Their Adult Children Around Tompkins County

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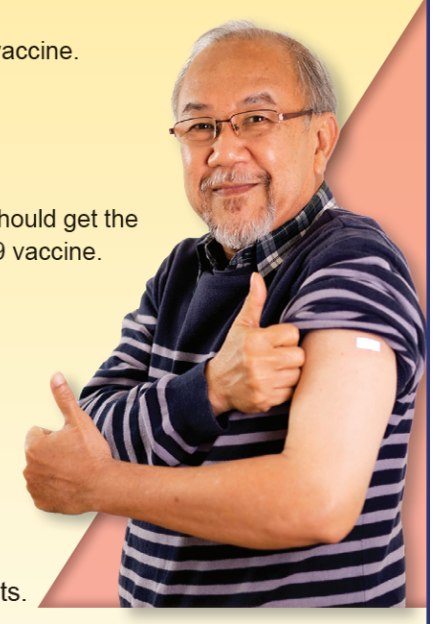
- Everyone age 6 months and older should get the new, updated 2026–2027 COVID-19 vaccine.

RSV Vaccine
- Everyone age 75 years and older, and higher risk adults over age 60 should get the RSV vaccine (consult your healthcare provider).



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Memories

continued from Senior Care page 2

blue purse my mom carried at my wedding is now one of my oldest daughter's favorite places to stash treasures. An ancient stuffed purple bear—something my mom gave to me long ago—now sleeps faithfully in my youngest daughter's room. I like the way these physical items provide a connection to my mom. They serve as a reminder that, although she isn't here now, she will always be a part of our family's evolving story.

Through me

As the years pass, it's becoming more apparent that I've adopted plenty of my mother's mannerisms and habits. I remember the way she used to wake us up: She'd hover over our beds and sing in a grating voice, "Wake up, wake up, you sleepyhead! When the red, red robin comes bob, bob, bobbin' along, a-LONG!" Now I do the same thing when trying to rouse my reluctant children from bed, and they're as irritated by my horrible rendition of Bing Crosby as I know I was by my mom's. I think she would also approve of my daily coffee habit, as I can scarcely recall a time during my childhood when she didn't have a mug of freshly brewed Folger's in her hand.

My mom loved all animals, so pets were a major part of my childhood—we had so many furry, scaly and feathery inhabitants that our house often felt like a mini zoo! For now, our family has just two guinea pigs and some low-maintenance fish, but I've definitely inherited my mother's enthusiasm for pets, so I'm betting more cute critters are in our future.

Even though they can't see her, hold her hand, or hear her voice, I know my daughters are starting to form their own picture of my mother in their minds. I will continue to share everything I can about her. And I know that someday, my kids will understand the important role their grandmother played in the family that loves them so much.

Gina Rich is a Wisconsin writer focusing on health, relationships, and travel.

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Caring for the Caregiver:
Tips to take care of yourself when caring for others

By Shannon Dean

Anyone who is part of an extended family may one day care for a loved one who cannot care for themselves. At some point in our lives, many of us will tend to a small child, an ill family member, or an aging parent. We step into caregiving out of love, out of necessity, or simply because it feels like the right thing to do. But even with the best intentions, the role often carries a high cost. Careers and finances may be put on pause. Physical and emotional health can take a hit. And when exhaustion sets in, it's hard to give our loved ones the care we want for them. That's why caring for yourself isn't selfish—it's essential. Here are some practical tips to help you stay healthy while caring for those you love.

Embrace the role

Caregivers often downplay their efforts. But pausing your life to give so much of yourself is significant and may require a change in thinking. Identifying as a caregiver allows you to accept the help and the resources that make life easier. Although caregiving may mean a shift in priorities, it doesn't mean that you come last.

Leave the guilt

Statistics from The Caregiver Alliance indicate that caregivers spend anywhere from 24-41 hours per week tending to someone else. So it is normal to feel exhausted, frustrated, or resentful, and to wish for an occasional break. Barry J. Jacobs, the author of *The Emotional Survivor's Guide For Caregivers*, reassures that "ambivalence toward caregiving should be a normal, expectable reaction that doesn't invalidate your love or devotion."

Accept appropriate help

It's understandable to want to care for your newborn or elderly parent yourself. But friends and family can do laundry, supply a meal, or run errands. Loved ones often want to help but aren't sure how. So accepting whatever aid you are comfortable with benefits everyone.

Seek out local and digital resources

Many communities offer free or low-cost caregiving resources. Medical centers may provide classes and support groups. Social services offer transportation, meals, and education. Check with your local government to learn what's available. (Editor's note: In Tompkins and Cortland counties, dial 2-1-1 for assistance.) Additionally, most national organizations provide help online.

Join a support group

Caregiving can feel isolating, but you don't have to face it alone. Support groups connect you with others who truly understand what you're going through. Whether in person or online, they offer a safe space to share your experiences, exchange advice, and find encouragement. Many groups also point you toward helpful resources, which saves precious time. Cynthia Orange, author of *Take Good Care: Finding Joy In Compassionate Caregiving,* says that support groups prove that "there is strength in the common struggle." They provide "a place where caregivers can share their feelings and fears without being judged or told what to do or feel."

Keep a journal

Releasing frustrations and recording triumphs via the written word allows you to commiserate even when alone. Plus, you'll have one place to record your loved one's important milestones, events, or symptoms. Many find that writing about gratitude or even small victories helps maintain optimism. You can use a physical journal, or you may be more comfortable with a password-protected digital option.

Make your own health a priority

Statistics show that around 72% of caregivers do not receive regular medical care. Avoid putting your own health last. Regular checkups, a healthy diet, adequate exercise, and stress management are vital. "Your own self-care can help you stay healthy and strong enough to do one of the most important things you will ever do in your life. And that is good news for both you and your loved one," says Jane Meir Hamilton, author of *The Caregiver's Guide to Self-Care: Help For Your Caregiving Journey*.

Watch for signs of stress

Although we carefully watch our loved one for any signals of distress, we miss these signs in ourselves. Be on the lookout for weight loss, changing sleep patterns, prolonged sadness or irritability, or chronic physical ailments. Your body may be telling you to consider accepting help or to take more time for yourself.

Give yourself credit

One of the unfortunate realities of caregiving is that your loved one may not be in a position to thank you for your efforts. So the acknowledgment may need to come from you. Although it is easy to experience doubt in the absence of affirmation, take a moment to acknowledge the gift you're giving those you love.

4 Free Self-Care Resources

- Family Caregiver Alliance's State-by-State Search Function: FCA's website allows you to search for caregiving resources by state. It also includes a section for support groups and classes. https://www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator
- ZocDoc: This free app can remind you of routine health appointments. You'll never need to remember the last time you went to the dentist, primary care physician, or dermatologist. Patients can instantly view or make appointments and can see verified reviews of specialists.
- 7-Minute Workouts: There are a variety of 7-minute workout apps available, several of which are free. They can help you complete a decent workout anywhere, without special equipment, in only seven minutes. Try Johnson & Johnson Original, Seven, and 7 Minute Workout by 7M.
- 750 Words: This free site offers a digital, secure place to record your thoughts and gauge your feelings. It reveals private daily stats about your mood, your largest concerns, and your current mindset. The site is searchable, password-protected, and offers a reward system to keep you writing.

Shannon Dean is a freelance writer and the mother of two sons. She specializes in writing about families and women's health.



Finding and accepting the help you need

Caregivers can take steps to prevent depression

By Lisa M. Petsche

Family members and friends provide practical assistance and enhance the quality of life for ill or frail seniors who might otherwise require long-term care. The help they provide ranges from chauffeuring, shopping, running errands and paying bills to housekeeping, preparing meals, managing medication, and assisting with personal care.

Other typical caregiver responsibilities include coordinating care and advocating for the ill person's needs. If the care receiver is cognitively impaired, caregivers may also provide supervision to ensure safety. In addition, caregivers provide companionship and emotional support.

Although it has its rewards, the caregiving role can be physically, psychologically, emotionally, and financially demanding. It is particularly challenging when it continues over a long period of time, and when the care receiver has complex needs, a demanding personality, or mental impairment.

While a certain degree of stress is inevitable, when left unchecked it can lead to the caregiver becoming physically, mentally, and emotionally run down. Depression may result.

According to the Family Caregiver Alliance, "A conservative estimate reports that 20 percent of family caregivers suffer from depression, twice the rate of the general population." The rate is even higher for those caring for someone with dementia.

If you are a caregiver, consider the following strategies for keeping stress manageable and reducing your risk of depression.

• Accept the reality of your relative's illness so that you can appropriately plan for the future.

• Learn as much as possible about the illness or condition and its management.

• Cultivate a positive mindset. Focus on what your loved one *can* do, rather than on what they can't. And remind yourself regularly of your own strengths and successes as a caregiver.

• Take time for activities and practices that bring you peace – meditating, writing in a journal, listening to music, going for a walk

• Set up a relaxation room or corner in your home—a tranquil spot you can retreat to in order to rejuvenate.

• Develop a calming ritual to help you unwind at day's end.

• Make a conscious effort to look after your own health: eat nutritious meals, get adequate rest and exercise, and get regular medical checkups.

• Stay connected to people whose company you enjoy.

• Simplify your life where you can. Establish priorities, and let go of things that aren't crucial right now. If finances permit, hire a housecleaning service or a companion for your relative, to free up some of your time and energy.

• Be flexible about plans and expectations, and let friends and family know that you need to take things one day at a time for now.

• Give yourself permission to feel all emotions that surface, including resentment and frustration, which are normal. Remind yourself that you are doing your best. You're only human—not superhuman.

• Don't keep problems to yourself. Seek support from an understanding relative or friend, a therapist, or a trusted religious leader. Join a caregiver support group in your community or on the Internet.

• Accept offers of help, and ask other family members to share the load where possible. Be specific about what you need.

• Seek out information about community support services and take full advantage of them. Your local office on aging is a good place to start.

Depression: An overview

Contrary to popular belief, depression does not stem from personal weakness. The depressed individual cannot "buck up" or "snap out of it." Clinical or major depression is a medical illness involving a chemical imbalance in the brain. The most common symptoms are as follows:

• a change in appetite resulting in weight loss or gain

• a change in sleep patterns – needing a lot more sleep or experiencing insomnia

• feeling chronically tired or a lack of energy

• noticeable slowing of movements, speech, or thinking

• unexplained physical aches and pains, or exacerbation of chronic health issues

• difficulty concentrating, remembering things, and making decisions

• feeling anxious, irritable or angry most of the time

• feeling sad, and perhaps also crying easily, for no particular reason

• feeling guilty, incapable, unlovable, or hopeless

• lacking interest in activities that normally bring enjoyment

• withdrawal from social contact

• preoccupation with death or recurring thoughts of suicide

If any of the above symptoms persist for more than a few weeks and interfere with your ability to carry out the activities of daily living, make an appointment to see your primary physician. In the case of suicidal thoughts, help should be sought immediately via community crisis resources. Depending on the severity of symptoms, treatment may involve counseling, antidepressant medication, or a combination of the two. The sooner help is obtained for depression, the easier it is to treat.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and a freelance writer specializing in boomer and senior health matters. She has personal experience with elder care.

GreenStar Food Co+op

Parmesan Pork Chops

These crispy, cheesy chops will bring the family to the table, once they get a whiff of the parmesan crust sizzling in the pan. They only take a few minutes in the pan. Just be gentle with them, and use a thin metal spatula to slide under them in the pan when turning, so you don't lose any of that delicious cheese.



Recipe Information

Total Time: 30 minutes, 10 minutes active
Servings: 6

Ingredients

6 thin-cut, bone-in pork chops
2 large eggs
1 cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese
1 cup panko bread crumbs
Salt and pepper
1/4 cup canola oil

Preparation

1. (Optional) For a nicer presentation, French the bones by stripping off the tendons with a paring knife.
2. In three bowls wide enough to hold a pork chop, separately place the eggs, Parmesan and panko.
3. Hold each chop by the bone and coat with parmesan, then eggs, then crumbs. This can be done up to four hours ahead and chilled. If chops are chilled, let come to room temperature for 10 minutes before frying.
4. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium high heat until hot. Fry chops for about 4 minutes per side, turning with tongs. Salt and pepper each side as it is done.

Serving Suggestion

Round out these savory pork chops with well-loved and easy sides like roasted potatoes and steamed green beans or peas. Chop up any leftover pork chops to top a Caesar salad for a quick and satisfying lunch the next day.

Nutritional Information

340 calories, 15 g. fat, 160 mg. cholesterol, 420 mg. sodium, 13 g. carbohydrate, 1 g. fiber, 35 g. protein

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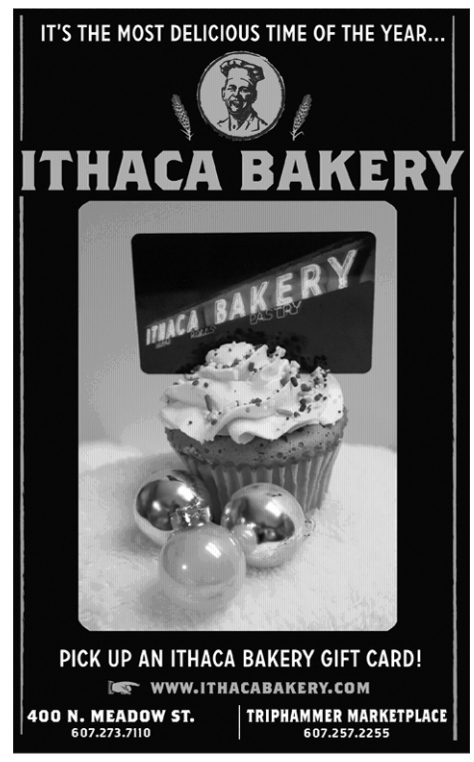


Working with the Pros:
Tips for communicating with healthcare providers

By Lisa M. Petsche

If you are caring for a relative with a chronic illness, you may come in contact with a variety of healthcare providers – doctors, nurses, and allied professionals such as physical therapists – in various settings: home, clinic, hospital, and perhaps also long-term care.

These days, health care is viewed as a partnership between patient and provider, with both parties responsible for ensuring a constructive relationship. Patients and caregivers are taking a more active role than ever in this regard.

Good communication is essential, of course, to any positive relationship. Read on for some ways you can do your part to make the most of interactions with healthcare professionals.

• Prepare questions in advance of phone conversations and meetings, and prioritize them.

• If you or your relative has a hearing or vision impairment, let the person know at the outset of the conversation. You may need to remind them in subsequent contacts.

• Share information that will help them to better understand and assist your relative: medical history, relevant social history, lifestyle, abilities and limitations, temperament, likes and dislikes.

• Educate yourself about your relative's health condition in order to facilitate communication with professionals. Avoid trying to be an expert, though. While there's a wealth of medical information readily available to consumers these days – especially via the Internet – and it's good to be informed, don't act as if you know more than the professional does. Be tactful and non-confrontational should you wish to challenge findings or recommendations.

• Educate yourself about the roles of involved professionals, and inquire about their goals and plans for your relative. Adjust your expectations if necessary, or try to negotiate a different plan of care.

• Ensure you are dealing with the right person by briefly stating the nature of any questions or concerns. If they can't help you, ask them to direct you to someone who can.

• Ensure the person has time to talk if you have numerous questions or a major concern. If they don't, ask them to schedule an appropriate block of time for you.

• When making telephone contact, be prepared to leave a concise voice message if the person is not available. Include the date and time, your name, your relative's name and your relationship to them, the nature of your call (in one sentence), your daytime phone number, and the best time to reach you. Speak slowly and clearly. If either of you is hard to reach, set an appointment to talk by phone or in person.

• Write down key information provided during conversations and conferences (keep a note pad and pen handy). Request a layperson's explanation if you don't understand medical jargon, and ask for clarification when instructions aren't clear.

• Maintain good communication with other involved family members, keeping them up-to-date on your relative's status, activities and plans. If the situation is complicated or major decisions are required, you may wish to request a family meeting.

• Be forthcoming about what your relative and you need and expect; don't assume others know. Learn to be assertive and proactive in your role as advocate.

• Address any concerns directly with the relevant care provider. Express it as calmly as possible and in a timely fashion. Provide detail and include an example or two; prepare notes if you tend to become flustered. Involve the person's supervisor only if the issue does not get resolved.

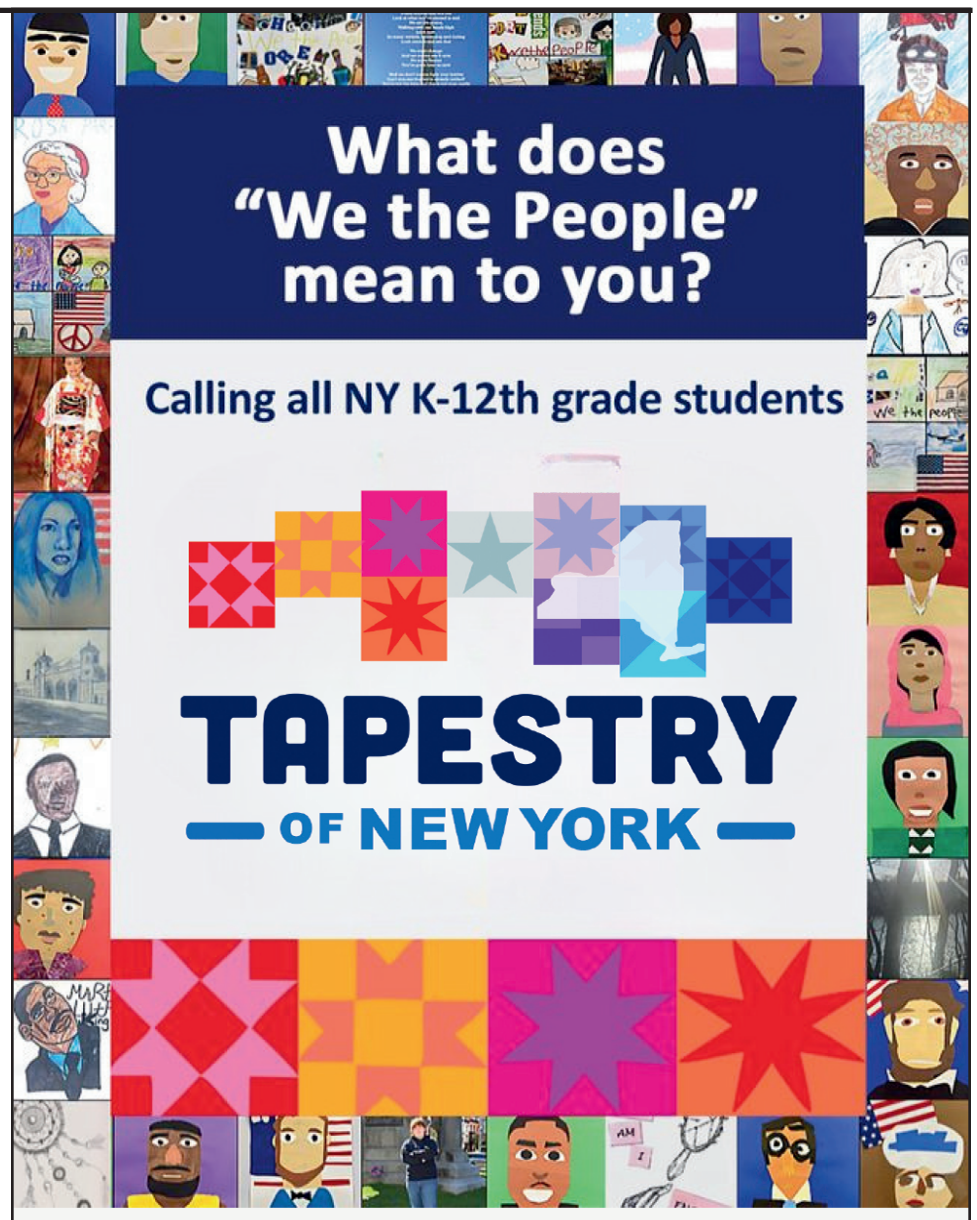
• If a situation causes you distress, try to compose yourself before addressing your concern – otherwise, it's difficult to have a constructive discussion. Depending on the issue and the number of people involved, you may wish to request a meeting. If you are anxious or angry, bring along a relative or friend—preferably someone less emotional—for support and to help you stay focused. Whenever possible, suggest solutions. Be courteous and give others the benefit of the doubt; expect to be treated likewise. Avoid shouting and making threats, which only exacerbate a problem.

• Keep in mind that you and your relative's healthcare providers are partners, even if you don't always speak the same language or agree about diagnoses or plans. Do your best to work *with* them, rather than against them.

• If you lose your temper and later regret it, apologize in order to get communication back on track. Rest assured professionals understand that frustration and caregiver stress sometimes cause people to overreact or otherwise behave uncharacteristically.

• Express appreciation when you are pleased with the care your relative is receiving – a little goes a long way in forging a positive relationship.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and a freelance writer who has personal and professional experience with elder care.



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Announcements

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mons, 11:00am-3:00pm (or until the cookies sell out). Your cookie purchases help raise funds for more affordable homes in our community. Cookies packed by customers at the event are $13 a pound. Pre-orders and grab-n-go pre-packed containers are $15 a pound. Info: https://tchabitat.com/events/cookie-walk/.

Stories with Santa
Southworth Library, 11:30am. Featuring free copies of *Santa's First Christmas* by Mac Barnett (while supplies last); photos with Santa; make an edible gnome; make a gnome bookmark; plus games and snacks! Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Holiday Ukelele & Hula Hut Dancers
Tompkins County Public Library, 1:00pm. Stop by during Downtown Ithaca's Winter Holiday Bash for festive holiday tunes and amazing hula dancing! https://www.tcpl.org/event/holiday-ukulele-hula-hut-dancers-66792.

Handmade Holiday Market
Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, 1:00-6:00pm. An annual artisan event held in conjunction with Trumansburg's WinterFest. Featuring local crafts, artwork, and seasonal live music. Our second annual Gingerbread House contest will be held in partnership with Hula Hut. Info: https://www.tburgarts.org/event-calendar.

Groton's First Festival of Lights
1:00-5:00pm. Groton's annual tree lighting is expanding into its first Festival of Lights, featuring an afternoon of caroling, games, wreath-making, a gingerbread house contest, scavenger hunt, hot cocoa bar, and more! Santa Claus will arrive at 5:00 to light the Village Christmas tree. Info: https://grotonfestivaloflights.com.

Girls Who Code: Workshop for Kids and Tweens
Tompkins County Public Library, 2:00pm. Women in Computing at Cornell present this beginning coding workshop. Best for elementary and middle school students (or homeschool equivalent). Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/girls-who-code-coding-workshop-kids-and-tweens-66336.

30th Annual WinterFest
Main Street, Trumansburg, 3:00-6:00pm. A family-friendly celebration of the season featuring lights, music, treats, street performers and carolers, Santa and Mrs. Claus, and more. Info: facebook.com/TburgWinterFest.

Christmas with the Celts
State Theatre, 7:30pm. Celebrating 14 years of national touring, *Christmas with the Celts* perform a combination of timeless, ancient Irish Christmas Carols and lively Irish dance with modern contemporary songs with Irish instrumentation. Tickets: www.stateofithaca.org.

6 Sunday

Science Connections: Encouraging Young Engineers & Scientists

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Parents as Advocates

Communication between parents, providers & schools

By Tara L. Wright, M.S.

In my role as school psychologist, I've seen great communication among providers, parents, and schools, as well as situations with a truly detrimental lack of communication. Often it falls on the parents to initiate communication, share documents, and regularly update those communications among all involved agencies, doctors, counselors, and the school. This can be a daunting task, and parents may feel overwhelmed at times. But the role they play in these situations is critical: Advocate. Below are some tips for parents when advocating for their child.

• Share the initial diagnosis with the school, including any documents that state the diagnosis, such as a doctor's note, psychoeducational reports, etc.

• Share information about any medication your child is taking with the school. Some parents are concerned about medication stigma, but it is important for the school to be able to help monitor for side effects, especially when a medication is new or newly changed.

• Share any school reports or accommodations with the diagnosing physician or psychologist.

• Share school updates (report cards, progress reports, teacher comments) with the diagnosing physician or psychologist.

Consistently sharing information among school, home, counselor, and medical doctor is an important role that parents and guardians play in maintaining a child's well-being. It is not uncommon for these various individuals and agencies to operate without complete information, resulting in slower progress and missteps. Despite best intentions, schools cannot fully support a child when they are unaware of medication dosage changes, counseling goals, and home routines. Similarly, physicians cannot fully assess without the input of the school, where a child may spend more waking hours than at home during weekdays. Without adequate input from both home and school, it will be difficult for a counselor to set realistic client goals and assess progress.

Here are some additional tips for parents new to the role of advocate:

• Share information among school, home, physician, and counselor often. This is your child's "team" and you are the "team captain".

• Sign "release of information" documents to allow school, physician, and counselor to exchange information as needed throughout the school year. You can place limits on some of this information if you have privacy concerns—for example, you might allow all information except the contents of family therapy sessions.

• If your child has a special education plan or 504 plan, attend these meetings prepared with current documents from the physician and counselor.

• Be sure to share information about your child's behavior, goals, success, and struggles at home. Similarities *and* differences between home and school are important pieces of information.

• If you have questions, ask. Each member of your child's team should be working toward the same goal—helping your child succeed.

When a child is struggling, it can be draining on the parents as well as on the whole family. Taking a team approach to care management not only allows each member of the team to function more productively with all the necessary information, it takes some pressure off the parents to "be everything" for that child. Your child's school, doctor, and counselor are all there to support your child's progress, and your role as advocate helps them to do that job better.

Tara Wright has over 20 years of experience working in mental health and education, and is the parent of four children. She is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, National Board Certified Counselor, and a Certified School Psychologist.

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Growing Child Care in Tompkins County

A need for care

By Barb Mechalke

A strong child-care system is essential to a healthy community. Quality child-care programs support children, families, employers, and the local economy. Tompkins County, like much of the United States, is facing a child care shortage. Data show that locally there are only enough regulated child-care slots to accommodate one out of three children under the age of five. In our county, roughly 4,500 children versus 1,370 available slots leave more than 3,000 children and working families without access to care.

Family and Group-Family Day Care Programs have steadily declined over the past two decades. Twenty years ago, Tompkins County had approximately 120 home-based child care programs. Today, that number has fallen to just 32. These programs often offer more flexible schedules that help meet the needs of families working non-traditional hours. While larger child-care centers increased in number over the same period, there are still not enough openings to meet the current need of local families.

To address the local child-care crisis, the Child Development Council has partnered with Cornell University to develop the Community Child Care Supply Growth Initiative. Through Cornell's financial partnership, the initiative is investing up to 1.86 million dollars in grants for providers and other support services over a five-year period.

"The Initiative aims to increase the supply of high-quality child care in Tompkins County by offering comprehensive support through the application and registration process, and by offering financial grant awards to help offset the cost of opening a new program or expanding an existing program. This is an exciting opportunity for those who love children and want to operate their own child-care business," says Barb Mechalke, child care development director at the Child Development Council.

"Building a stronger child care system is about more than creating additional child care spaces. Cornell recognizes that investing in local child care is an investment in the long-term strength and sustainability of our community, and we're proud to partner with the Council in this important work," says Michelle Artibee, director of workforce wellbeing at Cornell.

Grant funding can be used for a wide variety of needs, including required health and safety training, furnishings and equipment for new child-care spaces, learning materials, diaper changing stations, strollers, baby gates, and outdoor play equipment. Funds may also be used for fencing, renovations, or construction projects necessary to obtain or maintain licensing and registration requirements.

In addition to financial support, the Initiative provides individualized technical assistance throughout the registration/licensing process and beyond to promote long-term success. Child Development Council staff visit proposed sites and offer feedback about changes the space may need to meet state regulations. Staff assist providers with the application process, and share valuable resources and information on how to provide quality care while following regulations. Environmental assessments are done in collaboration with providers to ensure the space is safe, stimulating, and developmentally-appropriate for young children.

The Child Development Council's Child Care Business Specialists offer strategies and suggestions on marketing, developing contracts, and creating parent handbooks to encourage solid business practices. Additionally, Council staff provide ideas about program development, best practices, and feedback on layout, traffic patterns, and underutilized spaces.

This multi-pronged approach of the Community Child Care Supply Growth Initiative has proven successful. Currently in its third year, the Initiative has invested in 16 new and expanded child-care programs. Once all programs are fully operational, over 200 new openings will have been created for children six weeks to five years of age. An additional 70 openings will have been created for school age children.

Initiative grant recipients have shared how much they appreciate the support provided by the CDC team and the opportunity to receive grant funds to make their dream of operating their own child-care business a reality.

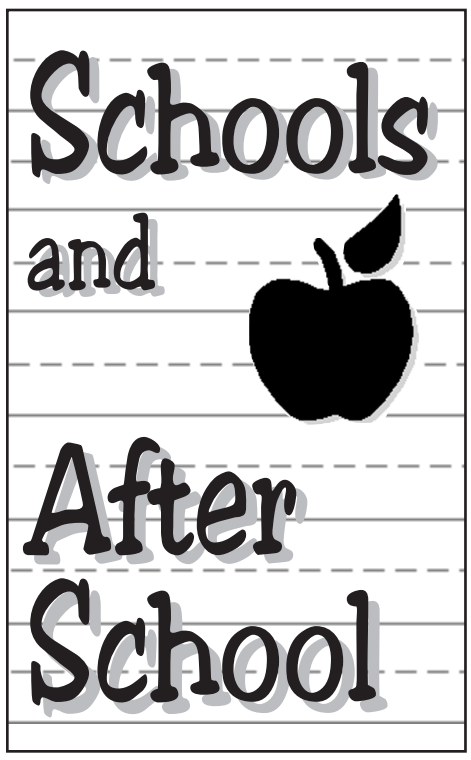
"I was able to get a program up and running without going into debt. Without this [Initiative] I couldn't have gotten licensed and been as successful as I have been in the past year."

"The Initiative has been very helpful in providing us with resources we wouldn't be able to acquire otherwise. I also think after having worked in a school setting surrounded by other veteran teachers, I've really missed the mentoring piece. It's hard to be both a manager and a teacher. [Child Care Development Director] Barb has become a great person to bounce ideas off of and brainstorm with as well as a very experienced source of knowledge."

"The Initiative allowed me to get started in the first place—the start-up costs would have been prohibitive otherwise. It is also continuing to improve my environment, and it got me connected with CACFP [Child and Adult Care Food Program] which I might not otherwise have found on my own."

The Community Child Care Supply Growth Initiative is a unique opportunity for those interested in providing child care in Tompkins County. Those interested in opening or expanding a program are encouraged to reach out to Barb Mechalke at 607-273-0259 x127 or barb@childdevelopmentcouncil.org. Visit www.childdevelopmentcouncil.org for more information about the Initiative and the CDC.

Barb Mechalke started working at the CDC in January 1996. The focus of her work is to assist and support child-care providers to improve the quality of their programs. If you ask her, she will tell you she has the best job at the Child Development Council.









Announcements

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Sciencenter, 11:00am. EYES is excited to bring engaging science and engineering activities to the Sciencenter in order to encourage young students to consider careers in STEM fields. Info: www.sciencenter.org.

Wreath Making Workshop
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 1:00-3:00pm. Use fresh evergreen boughs and other natural materials to create a one-of-a-kind wreath to complement your holiday decor. This program is intended for individuals ages 13 and above. Participants aged 13-15 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration: https://www.limehollow.org/christmas-tree-sale-holiday-market.

Holly Tour of Homes
Village of Dryden, 1:00-4:00pm. A tour showcasing historical homes in Dryden decorated for the holidays. Info: https://drydennyhistory.org.

Hanukkah Celebration for Young Families
Congregation Tikkun v'Or, 3:00-5:00pm. Enjoy crafts, dreidel games, songs, stories, and snacks. Hosted by Ithaca Area United Jewish Community. Info: https://www.tikkunvor.org.

7 Monday

First Mondays with WSKG Kids
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Kick off each month with curiosity and creativity in this hands-on STEAM series for children and families. Each session features a new topic paired with a PBS KIDS clip, big thinking questions, and a creative activity or craft. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/first-mondays-wskg-kids-67020.

8 Tuesday

Toddler & Preschool Art Studio
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Join us for open exploration and discovery with a variety of art and crafting materials. This drop-in program is offered on the second Tuesday of each month. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/toddler-preschool-art-studio-64497.

9 Wednesday

4-H Crafting: Tea Blends & Tins
Cornell Cooperative Extension, Willow Ave, 6:30pm. Join us for a cozy, creative evening designed to spark your holiday spirit and support your local 4-H programs! Create two 2oz loose-leaf tea blends using a caffeinated and/or non-caffeinated base plus a variety of floral, fruity, herbal, earthy, and spicy add-ins. Registration: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2026/12/02/4-h-crafting-tea-blends-and-tins.

11 Friday

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for crafts, snacks, songs, great stories, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Teen Studio
Johnson Museum of Art, 4:00–6:00pm. Unleash your creativity, experiment with an array of materials, and have fun alongside your peers. Drop by the Cox Studio for artistic inspiration in a stress-free environment, with snacks provided. These free sessions are facilitated by Cornell undergraduate fine arts majors and open to all middle and high school students. Info: museum.cornell.edu.

Ithaca Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker
State Theatre, 7:30pm. Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Choreography by Lavinia Reid. Info/tickets: www.ithacaballet.org, www.stateofithaca.org.

12 Saturday

Holiday Market
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 10:00am-4:00pm. Featuring craft, artisan, and specialty-food vendors giving you access to one-of-a-kind holiday gifts, provisions, and more. Shop locally for everyone on your list! Info: https://www.limehollow.org/christmas-tree-sale-holiday-market.

Little Red Wagon Artisan Market
Triphammer Marketplace, December 12-13. Info coming soon to https://www.littleredwagonartisans.com.

Paws to Read
Southworth Library, 10:30am. Join the Cornell Canine Companions for an hour filled with furry friends, good stories, and a chance to practice your reading. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Study Buddies
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Study

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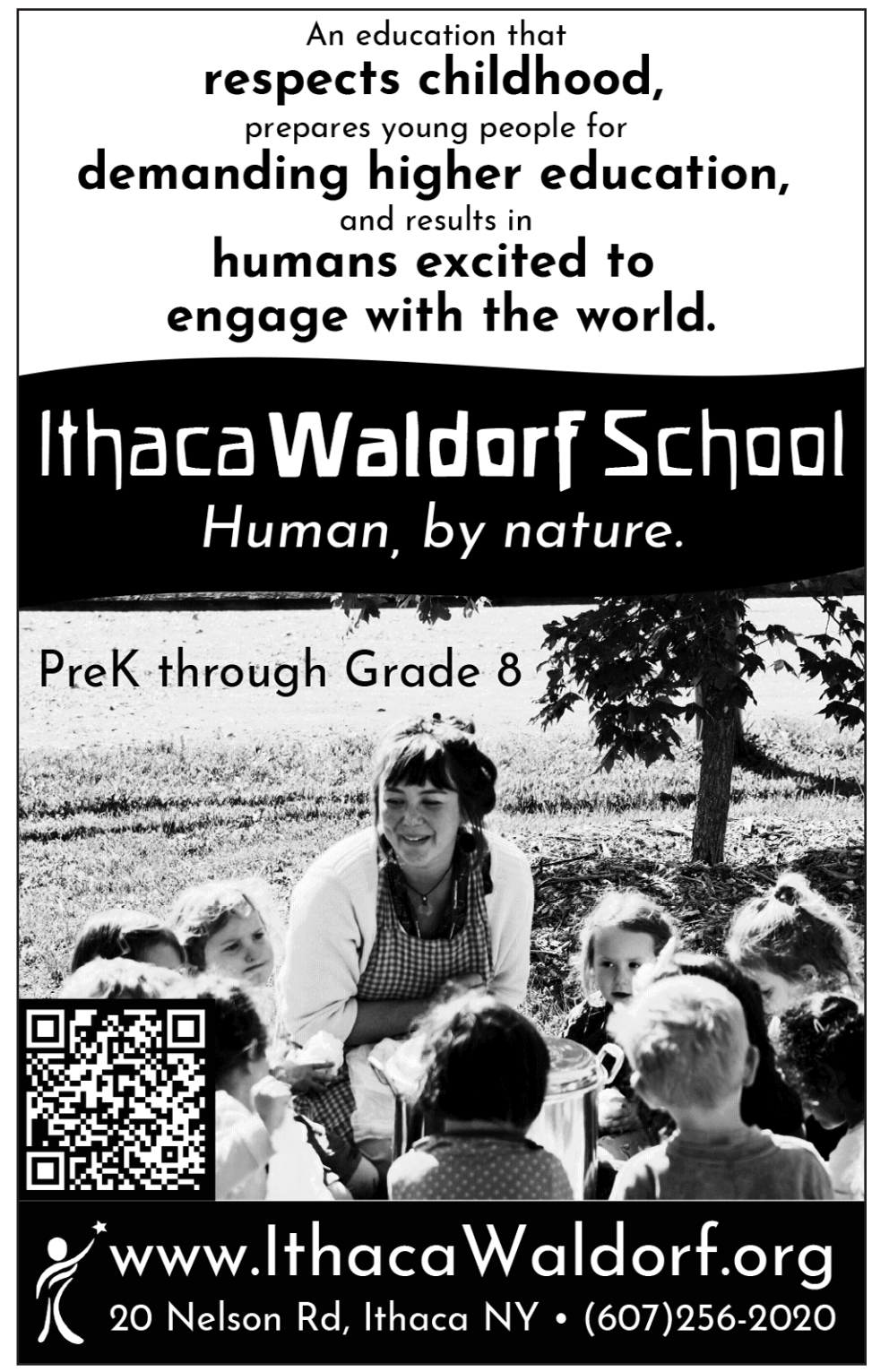


Adventures in Parenting

Blueberry tales, laundry lore, and lessons from the Hundred Acre Wood

By Jayasri Srinivasan

"Then would you read a Sustaining Book, such as would help and comfort a Wedged Bear in Great Tightness?" *

I was comfortably wedged between the cushions of our cozy, well-worn couch. We had placed it strategically under the windows so the afternoon sun would promote high-quality napping. I had eaten a bowl of warm oatmeal topped with peanut butter and jelly.

I was also congratulating myself on my choice of reading material. As the saying goes, "The days are long and the years are short, but Winnie-the-Pooh is forever."

Ok, maybe that isn't the *exact* saying, but you get my drift.

My 9th grader, Atula, was emptying his backpack after school.

"What are all those clothes coming out of your backpack, Atuli?"

"Those are my dirty clothes from our New Jersey trip, Amma."

"You took your dirty laundry to school?! But why?? And why did you use your school bag as your travel backpack?!"

"I forgot to unpack after our trip, and this bag is fine. Chill Amma!"

I watched as he continued, removing a football, several wads of paper, a bottle of moisturizer, and another hoodie.

"And where are your books?" I asked.

"We don't have to carry books to school, Amma!"

"Ok, then what about your homework folders? No wonder you never take your homework to school—there's no room for it in your backpack!"

Atula didn't stick around to hear the rest of my diatribe. He had more pressing matters to deal with. Like removing miniscule stains from his hoodie. He has a whole system consisting of dish soap, oxy clean, and a toothbrush. He's constantly washing real and imaginary stains out of his monochromatic wardrobe. If only he paid this much attention to his school work…

My son's passion for laundry rivals only that of his formidable grandmother. My mother is otherwise unmatched in her zeal for washing clothes. And lest you think she's lured by shiny automated machines, think again! Back in the day, she exhibited the same fervor as Atula. She started by soaking the clothes in soapy water, then scrubbing them with the ubiquitous detergent soap used in India at the time—*Rin*. Who can forget that dark blue bar that took both the stains off your clothes and the skin off your hands! She would then beat the clothes against the vertical washing stone, rinse them off in multiple buckets of water, wring them out, and dry them on the clothesline. Whew! Just writing about all that was exhausting.

When I told her about Atula's washing mania, she beamed proudly. "At least my grandson has taken after me."

How I miss those days when Atuli was tiny, grubby, and pre-verbal. Why has time passed so quickly? As for my oldest, Tharun, I barely remember his baby days. He was born a month earlier than his due date, impatient and grumpy, with frown lines on his forehead and very hairy little arms. The lovely nurse greeted him memorably: "Hello, little monkey man!"

One day, when he was about a year old, I plonked him on the rug in the living room and put a bowl of plump blueberries in front of him.

"Who's my little blueberry muffin?" I cooed as he stuffed a fistful of blueberries in his mouth. That was one of my sister's special names for him, when he was a mere blob visible on the sonogram.

I stepped into the kitchen to get his water bottle. Suddenly I heard a cough. I dashed back into the living room and saw that his mouth was purple and his eyes were wide open.

"Oh my god, he's choking!" I thought.

Without pausing to check or think, I called 911. Probably before acting like a lunatic, I should have taken a teensy minute to remind myself, "Jayasri, you doofus, you gave him blueberries. They're squishy. Nobody chokes on blueberries! Especially not a baby who demolished half a bagel just this morning. And of course he looks wide-eyed: he's just stuffed himself by the fistful! He's probably exhausted from all the effort and must have burped loudly and startled himself. And yes, Einstein, his lips are purple because of the blueberries and not lack of oxygen."

The emergency responders arrived quickly, and calmly appraised the non-emergency situation I had just dragged them into. They listened graciously to my profuse, embarrassed apologies. Fire Chief George could not have been kinder. "We do get calls like these from time to time, especially from first time moms. Don't worry about it. Better to be safe than sorry!"

"Is that the end of the story?" asked Christopher Robin.

"That's the end of that one. There are others."

"About Pooh and Me?"

"And Piglet and Rabbit and all of you. Don't you remember?"

"I do remember, and then when I try to remember, I forget."

... Christopher Robin nodded. "I do remember," he said, "only Pooh doesn't very well, so that's why he likes having it told to him again. Because then it's a real story and not just a remembering."

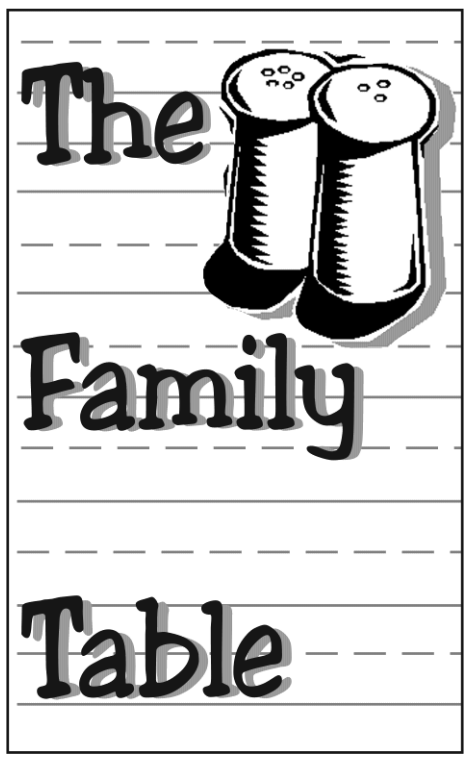
*"That's just how I feel," I said.***

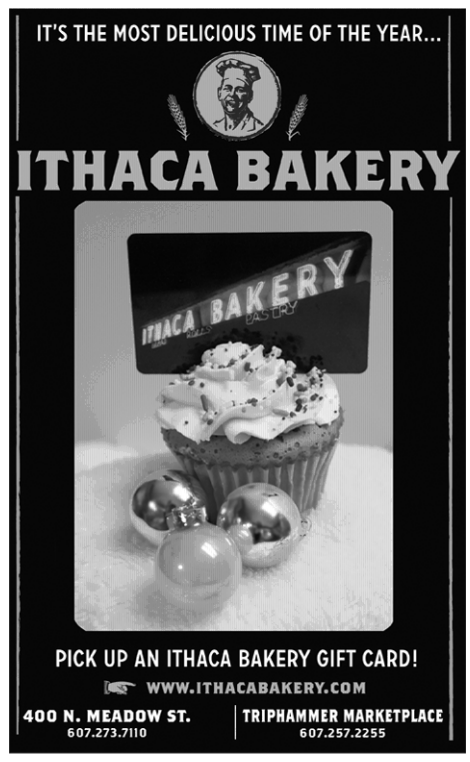
That's it for now dear readers! I hope your year winds down gently and your days are filled with joy and light. I wish you abundant space and time for storytelling and memory making with your loved ones.

* *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) by A.A. Milne, chapter 2

** *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) by A.A. Milne, chapter 1

Jayasri Srinivasan is a regular Ithaca Child contributor.





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Well Being: Healing Wisdom, Recipes & Remedies:

Building immunity and tending to our immune system

By Lara Johnson

We all know the feeling of disappointment that comes with getting sick and having to put life on hold. It might happen during the busy times when we feel like there is no way we can slow down or during the holidays when we are traveling and out of our daily rhythms.

It is common to have times when our appetite is poor, our energy is low, or we need to sleep more. We live in bodies that are evolved to fluctuate with the seasons of Nature. Sickness is a natural part of life. And although it is not something we can abate or control, there are ways we can help ourselves maintain wellness by bolstering our immunity and tending to our health.

Let's begin with the different factors at play when we get sick. Usually, sickness arises when there is the presence of an external pathogen(s) *and* when our internal environment is off balance (making us more susceptible to the pathogen). Have you ever noticed that you tend to come down with something when traveling, stressed, or sleep deprived? When our inner harmony is affected, our ability to ward off external elements becomes compromised.

So, to bolster our immunity, we want to balance our internal environment (digestion, elimination, energy, etc.), and protect ourselves from external factors. When in good health, we should be able to maintain a strong barrier between ourselves and the outside world; however, when we are stressed, not sleeping well, traveling, in a season where there is a strong climatic effect, or going through a major life event, we should take more care in protecting our immunity. This includes: dressing properly, eating well, making time for sleep, and adding some immune-boosting foods and lifestyle practices to our days.

My advice is to try to notice the initial signs and symptoms that your body is off – changes in appetite, energy, sleep, or elimination, or the presence of chills, body aches or excess mucus. Mentally, you might notice a decreased ability in yourself or your child to "digest life"—that is, to manage and move through everyday challenges with equilibrium.

When you notice that your body feels a bit off, this is the time to be more thoughtful with what you eat, the activities you engage in, and your daily routine. If you or your child is feeling unwell, make more time for rest and pare down what you're able to in your daily schedules. Cook simple, warm, easy-to-digest foods while avoiding dairy, sugar, processed and fried foods, eggs, cold foods, and raw vegetables. These can be more difficult to digest when digestion is weak and can further clog up our systems. Favor things like chicken soup with vegetables, rice porridge, apple sauce, squash soup, beef and barley stew. Go to bed early and let your children sleep in a little later if time allows.

In the fall and winter, you might like to have tulsi tea on hand, as well as local and raw honey, turmeric, ginger, licorice, and/or elderberry syrup. Tulsi is an adaptogen that helps improve immunity and ease daily stress. Turmeric is a natural "antibiotic"/antimicrobial that can be used with a little salt in warm water as a gargle when there is an onset of a sore throat in the household. Ginger tea helps to warm the body, enkindle appetite, and melt mucus. Licorice is an herb that moistens and lubricates the throat and respiratory pathways while also helping to melt mucus, strengthen the vocal cords, and drain heat and inflammation. Raw honey helps bring medicine to the lungs and can also help to dissolve mucus. Elderberry and *amalaki* (Indian gooseberry) are high in antioxidants and help build immunity.

The best thing we can do for ourselves and our loved ones when we get sick is to take time to rest and let the body heal. It may not be easy to do—but it is a great lesson to live and model for our children.

Below are two recipes for sick days plus a home self-care practice. All three are simple, easy, and help to restore balance.

Simple stovetop chicken soup (serves four)

- 2 organic chicken legs (with the bone in and skin on)
- 3 medium carrots
- 2 stalks celery
- 1/3 leek (green and/or white parts; rinse well to remove dirt)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp salt
- pinch black pepper
- 1/2 tsp herbes de Provence (or 1/4 tsp thyme and 1/4 tsp rosemary, or a fresh sprig of both)
- 8 cups water (or 4 cups broth and 4 cups water)

Optional: 1 parsnip or turnip, lemon to squeeze on top

Place the chicken legs in a large pot
Add 8 cups water along with the bay leaf, salt, herbs and black pepper. The chicken will naturally create a nice broth, so there is no need to use pre-made.
Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for 15-20 minutes
While the chicken cooks, wash and chop the vegetables. After 15-20 minutes, add them to the pot and continue to cook until tender.
Remove the chicken and chop or slice, then return to pot. Or simply let it fall apart in the pot.
Serve with your grain of choice: rice, buckwheat/kasha, savory oats, etc.

Stewed apples

- 6 apples (peeled, cored, and chopped into chunks)
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp ground clove (optional)

Put all ingredients into a pot.
Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low
Cook 20-30 minutes, until the apples are soft and mushy
Let cool and serve with a little raw honey mixed in if desired.

Eucalyptus steam (for nasal congestion)

You will need: a large heat-proof glass bowl, 2-3 drops eucalyptus essential oil, a couple of towels, hot water. *Use caution when handling essentials oils and boiling water*
Boil several cups of water and pour into the glass bowl. Squeeze in 2-3 drops of essential oil.
Place the bowl on a towel on the table (or floor if that's easier)
Place your face (or your child's face) a few inches from the bowl and breathe in the steam for several minutes. To keep the steam from escaping you can drape a towel over your head.

Easy Version:

Pour warm water onto a face towel with 1-2 drops of eucalyptus oil. Have your child breathe into the cloth and keep it with them for a few minutes, breathing into it now and then. **Again, use caution and be sure the eucalyptus oil doesn't come into direct contact with eyes.*

Lara Johnson is a regular Ithaca Child contributor.

GreenStar Food Co+op

Kabocha Squash Soup

This winter soup warms you up with its subtle Indian-influenced flavors. You can use any dense, slightly sweet winter squash, like butternut or Hubbard, if kabocha is not available. Serve over brown rice for a heartier dish.

Ingredients

1 medium kabocha squash
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons coconut oil
1 yellow onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 jalapeno, seeded and minced
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon coriander
1 teaspoon garam masala
3 cups vegetable broth
1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
Salt and black pepper to taste
1 lime, cut into wedges



Recipe Information

Total Time: 45 minutes | Servings: 4-6

Preparation

1. Heat oven to 375°F. Carefully cut squash into halves or quarters; remove the seeds, drizzle cut sides with olive oil and bake 30 to 40 minutes or until very tender. Scrape the flesh into a bowl and discard the skin. Roughly chop the squash.
2. In a large soup pot, heat the coconut oil over medium-high heat. Saute the onion for 6 to 8 minutes until soft. Add the garlic, ginger and jalapeño and cook another 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the spices and stir for one minute. Add broth, coconut milk and squash and bring the soup just to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer the soup for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and blend with an immersion blender until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with lime wedges.

Nutritional Information

180 calories, 14 g. fat, 0 mg. cholesterol, 135 mg. sodium, 11 g. carbohydrate, 2 g. fiber, 1 g. protein

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Making Magic on a Budget:
Low-cost winter holiday fun for families

By Shannon Dean

In the fall, when holiday catalogs start arriving and shops are already playing *Jingle Bell Rock* on repeat, many parents begin to feel the pressure building. We want to give our kids the kind of magical winter holiday that they will hopefully repeat with their own children. But when the cost of everything is rising and the budget doesn't stretch the way it used to, our expectations can turn into feelings of guilt or a sense of failure.

Fortunately, the holidays your child will remember have little to do with how much you spend. Kids likely won't recall how many presents they received, or that you served a gourmet meal, or that you put up some Pinterest-worthy decorations. What stays with them is the simple wonder of the season and the feeling of being safe, seen, and loved—none of which require a credit card.



Less really is more

We live in a world that tells us *more* is the measure of love. But ask adults what they remember from their childhood holidays, and they'll probably describe sensory experiences – like the way the house smelled when grandma baked Christmas cookies, the flickering glow of Hanukkah candles, the taste of hot cocoa with marshmallows, or the warmth of matching holiday pajamas.

Even better, research shows it's often the simplest moments that stay with us the longest. A Cornell University study found that experiences spark more lasting joy than mate-

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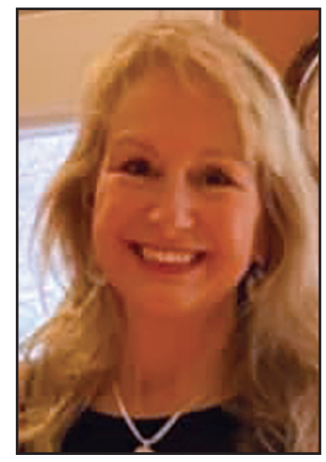

Kimberly Welch, MSN, PNP
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner with over 25 years primary care experience, specializing in breastfeeding families, among other concerns.



Wali M. Ahmadzai, M.S., P.A - C
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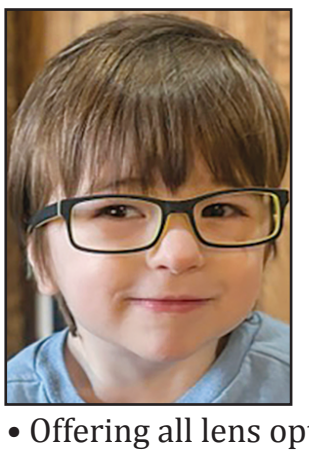

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Making Magic

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rial gifts. Sure, a toy might hold a child's attention for a few weeks, but rituals and activities like decorating gingerbread or taking a nighttime walk to look at holiday lights become the traditions they'll share with their own families.

Put aside the pressure to "do it all"

Even when you know intellectually that kids don't need an elaborate holiday, it's still easy to feel like you're not doing enough when so much of social media implies that everyone else has the budget for fancy decorations, elaborate outings, and expensive gifts.

If you're feeling that weight, you're not alone. A recent survey found that nearly half of parents expect to take on debt to pay for holiday expenses, and 77% feel pressure to top past holidays (when everything was less expensive). But this season doesn't have to be a competition—it can be a reset.

Kids don't need perfect; they need presence

Children are hard-wired to notice joy, not price tags. They truly don't care whether you bought the name-brand toy or the second-hand version, as long as you sit down and play with them. It doesn't matter to them if your cocoa came from the discount store or a fancy café. They only care that you let them pile on more marshmallows than should be allowed.

Even something as simple as a homemade countdown calendar, with small daily activities like *read a holiday story*, *write a letter to someone we love*, and *make a holiday gift* can become a treasured tradition. It doesn't have to be fancy. It just has to be your family's.

"Tradition and simplicity go hand in hand," reminds Atara Malach, author of *A Working Mother's GPS: A guide to parenting success for the modern working mom*. "Guests and family alike will remember the warmth of the experience, not how cutting-edge your décor or menu was. Save your energy for connection, not perfection."

Let kids in on the truth

Experts say it's okay to be honest with your children about what is financially realistic. They are capable of understanding that sometimes we make different choices because we are prioritizing the things that matter most.

Dr. Lisa Damour, author of *Untangled: Guiding teenage girls through the seven transitions into adulthood*, recommends taking a careful but reassuring approach. She suggests saying something like, "One thing that will be different this year is that we won't have as many presents. But we'll enjoy time together as a family, there will be a lot of love and fun, and we can count our blessings and think about what we can do for others."

When we stress the importance of giving, we're teaching our kids something far more valuable than what's inside any gift box – we're helping them learn generosity, gratitude, and how to find joy in the moment they're in.

Address practical matters

Embracing the notion of a simple, joyful holiday is an important step. And there are practical ways to cut spending. For example, many families adopt the "four gift rule," meaning that children receive something they want, something they need, something to wear, and something to read.

For extended family and adults, you can set gift budgets, agree that all gifts will be handmade or thrifted, or choose experiences instead of gifts.

Crafting and at-home activities are particularly meaningful for kids. Encourage them to make ornaments, gifts, or decorations. Embrace holiday baking days, family story nights, and holiday walks.

Prioritize what they'll actually remember

A few years from now, your child probably won't remember what was inside that wrapped box under the tree or beside the candles. But she'll remember the night you let her stay up late to watch a holiday movie. He'll remember stringing popcorn, hanging handmade snowflakes, and singing along to holiday music. They'll remember the feeling of being with family, being loved, and being part of something that didn't have to be perfect to be wonderful.

If the money's tight or the schedule's full this year, take a deep breath and let go of the pressure. Light some candles, turn up the music, and make space for the little things—because they're never little to your child. This year, they might just be the things they'll remember most.

Memory-making that costs nothing

It's easy to forget that what kids treasure most about the holidays isn't the latest gadget. It's the way their home felt in December. Here are a few no-cost ways to create some winter holiday magic:

- Night of the Lights. Pick one night to bundle up and walk or drive around to see the neighborhood lights. Bring a thermos of cocoa and play your favorite holiday playlist. Let the kids rate the houses and pick a "winner" just for fun.
- Holiday Story Hour. Dig out your old holiday books, or check out a few from the library. Light a candle, pull on fuzzy socks, and read aloud together. Let older kids take a turn reading. Or make up your own holiday tale as a family.
- Kindness Countdown. Create a DIY countdown calendar where each day suggests a small act of kindness. Write a note to a neighbor, donate old toys, make a card for a nursing home resident.

Talking to kids about budget-friendly holidays

What children really crave isn't more gifts – it's more connection. To explain a smaller holiday without creating guilt or disappointment, try saying:

- "We're being smart with our money this year so we can focus on what really matters—spending time together." OR
- "You're going to get a few really meaningful gifts. But the biggest gift is our family being together, making memories, and giving to others."

Invite them to plan a tradition, help with decorations, or make/pick out something for someone else. Empowering kids to participate shifts the focus from receiving to experiencing.

Crafts for decorating and memory-making

- Garland of Gratitude. Cut out enough paper hearts or stars to string together. Each day, have your kids write one thing they're thankful for on each heart or star. Then string them together into a garland.
- Wish Jar. Have each family member write down one wish for the holidays (non-material!) on a piece of paper, and place it in a decorated jar.
- Holiday Interview Book. Arrange time for your kids to "interview" grandparents, extended family, friends, parents, and siblings about their favorite holiday memories. They can write them down in a notebook or DIY scrapbook. Alternatively, help them to record the interviews and save them in a file to listen to every year.
- Handprint time capsule. Trace everyone's handprint on construction paper, write the year, and tuck them away to look back on next year. Add to it every year and use them as a decoration.

Shannon Dean is a freelance writer and the mother of two sons. She specializes in writing about families and women's health.

Announcements

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Buddies is for Ithaca students, by Ithaca students! High school volunteers will be matched up with younger students for homework help and general tutoring. Recommended for students aged 6-12. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/study-buddies-66789.

Ithaca Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker
State Theatre, 3:00pm. Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Choreography by Lavinia Reid. Info/tickets: www.ithacaballet.org, www.stateofithaca.org.

Parents Night Out: Winter Drop-n-Shop Edition
Finger Lakes Gymnastics Center, 4:00-8:00pm. Ages 4+. Get your holiday shopping done while your kids have a great time with us! Featuring open gym, gymnastics, ninja zone, highly trained coaches, pizza, and a G-rated movie. Registration: https://fingerlakesgymnasticscenter.com/pno.

13 Sunday

Tidepool Touch Tank
Sciencenter, 10:30am. Get hands-on with ocean life! Meet marine creatures up-close and learn how they live, move, and survive. A fun, interactive experience for curious kids and families. Info: www.sciencenter.org.

Holiday Market
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 10:00am-4:00pm. Featuring craft, artisan, and specialty-food vendors giving you access to one-of-a-kind holiday gifts, provisions, and more. Shop locally for everyone on your list! Info: https://www.limehollow.org/christmas-tree-sale-holiday-market.

Ithaca Ballet Presents: The Nutcracker
State Theatre, 3:00pm. Music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. Choreography by Lavinia Reid. Info/tickets: www.ithacaballet.org, www.stateofithaca.org.

18 Friday

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for crafts, snacks, songs, great stories, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Solstice Lantern Festival
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 4:00-7:00pm. Join us to celebrate the shortest day and longest night of the year! Warm up by a roaring fire, and enjoy hot soup and bread. Set your intentions for the new year by creating a wish bundle, and walk through a Winter Spiral made of evergreen branches. This is an all-outdoor event. Registration: https://www.limehollow.org/solstice.

19 Saturday

29th Annual Rutabaga Curl
Ithaca Farmers Market Pavilion, 10:00am-2:00pm. Registration for adults and kids begins at 10:00am. Younger participants can join the Turnip Toss! Bring the whole family to this wild, wacky and ridiculous event featuring MCs, referees, protestors, a chorus, instrumentalists, camera/radio crews, and more ru-

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tabaga lore than you knew existed. Schedule/info: https://ithacamarket.com/markets/rutabaga-curl/.

Miss Angie's Music
Southworth Library, 10:30am. Bring the kids to get their toes tapping and their bodies moving with stories and songs! Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Study Buddies
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Study Buddies is for Ithaca students, by Ithaca students! High school volunteers will be matched up with younger students for homework help and general tutoring. Recommended for students aged 6-12. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/study-buddies-66790.

Parents Night Out
Finger Lakes Gymnastics Center, 4:00-8:00pm. Ages 4+. Enjoy some time to yourself while your kids have a great time with us! Featuring open gym, gymnastics, ninja zone, highly trained coaches, pizza, and a G-rated movie. Registration: https://fingerlakesgymnasticscenter.com/pno.

20 Sunday

Meet a Reptile
Sciencenter, 2:00pm. Learn all about reptiles—and get up-close and personal with some of the Sciencenter's scaly animal ambassadors! Info: www.sciencenter.org.

21 Monday

Plants & the Winter Solstice
Cornell Botanic Gardens, choose the noon or 2:30pm session. Tour the Mullestein Winter Garden to learn how some plants cope with winter's cold; discover a variety of plants with winter beauty; and learn some of the cultural lore surrounding plants associated with the Winter Solstice. Enjoy refreshments in the warmth of the Nevin Welcome Center and do some holiday shopping in the gift shop. Registration: https://events.cornell.edu/event/plants-and-the-winter-solstice-2026.

30 Wednesday

Winter Puppet Show: Silly for the Holidays
Southworth Library, 2:30pm. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org and www.lilypadpuppettheatre.org.

January

1 Friday

First Day Hike
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 10:00am. Start the year off right with a fun guided hike along our trails. After the hike, enjoy a fire and some hot chocolate. Family-friendly route option available. Registration: https://www.limehollow.org/hikes.

2 Saturday

Ithaca Farmers Market Winter Market Opens
Triphammer Marketplace, Saturdays from 10:30am-2:00pm through March. Featuring produce, meats, cheeses, artisans, prepared foods, and more. Info: https://ithacamarket.com/markets/winter-market/.

4 Monday

First Mondays with WSKG Kids
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Kick off each month with curiosity and creativity in this fun, hands-on STEAM series for children and families. Each session features a new topic, paired with a PBS KIDS clip, big thinking questions, and a creative activity or craft. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/first-mondays-wskg-kids-67021.

7 Thursday

Winter Village Music Camp
Community School of Music & Arts, January 7-10. Winter Village Music has been bringing the best of traditional and progressive acoustic music to Ithaca for more than 15 years—in the dead of winter, when we need it most! Music Camp is designed for musicians of all skill and experience levels, offering more than one hundred workshops on fiddle, mandolin, guitar, banjo, bass, ukulele, singing, and songwriting in a variety of styles. Registration: https://www.wintervillagemusic.org.

8 Friday

Spanish Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Children of all ages and their caregivers are welcome to join us for songs, rhymes, stories, and crafts—completely in Spanish! After storytime, educators from the Johnson Art Museum will host a hands-on craft or activity that links the story to the art world. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/spanish-storytime-65982.

9 Saturday

Families Learning Science Together
Tompkins County Public Library, 2:00pm. Children ages 5 and up and their families are invited to a free science program presented by Chemists for Outreach and Graduate Inclusion at Cornell University. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/families-learning-science-together-66776.

14 Thursday

Ages 8-108 Board Game Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Are you between the ages of 8 and 108 and love playing board games? Join us! No registration is necessary; just drop in and join a game, and meet our staff and other board game enthusiasts. If you don't know how to play a game, don't worry—we'll teach you! Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/ages-8-108-board-game-club-spring-session-67033.

16 Saturday

Parents Night Out
Finger Lakes Gymnastics Center, 4:00-8:00pm. Ages 4+. Enjoy some time to yourself while your kids have a great time with us! Featuring open gym, gymnastics, ninja zone, highly trained coaches, pizza, and a G-rated movie. Registration: https://fingerlakesgymnasticscenter.com/pno.

18 Monday

School Break Day with Primitive Pursuits
4-H Acres, 9:00am-3:00pm. Ages 5-12. Come spend your day playing games, telling stories, carving, building shelters, cooking on campfires, and making crafts with materials we find in the forest. This is an all-outdoor, all-weather program. Registration: https://primitivepursuits.com/school-breaks/.

22 Friday

Moonlit Hike
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 6:00pm. Celebrate the moonlight with a brisk, guided hike to admire the beauty of Lime Hollow trails. The transition from day to night can be an exciting time to tune our senses to nature. Moonlit hikes take place whether the sky is clear or overcast. Registration: https://www.limehollow.org/hikes.

23 Saturday

Winter Square Dance
Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, 7:00-9:00pm. Part of our Community Dance Series. Featuring live music and callers. Info/tickets: https://www.tburgarts.org/event-calendar.

30 Saturday

Patty Ozer Story Ballet Presents: The Little Mermaid
171 Cedar Arts, Corning, January 30 and 31. Tickets go on sale in December. Info: www.171CedarArts.org and https://www.facebook.com/OzerStoryBallet/.

Parents are encouraged to contact each event for age appropriateness.

Submit Calendar Items for the Spring issue coming out in early February no later than 1/22/27.
Fax: 607-347-4302
E-mail: jgraney@twcny.rr.com
Mail: PO Box 242, Etna NY 13062

Display Classified Ad • One Column (2 3/8" wide) x $15.00
Line Classified Ads $5 first 10 words, 25 cents each added word. 607-327-1226

Learning & Lessons

CODDINGTON ROAD COMMUNITY CENTER one-and-a-half to five years. Half, Three Quarters and Full Day 7:30 am to 5:30pm. 277-1434.

ITHACA WALDORF SCHOOL Kindergarten through Elementary. Enrollment Applications available. Call 256-2020 or visit www.ithacawaldorf.org

DAY CARE IS A TOUGH DECISION. Find our why parents choose IC3. Ithaca Community Childcare Center. Enrolling. 579 Warren Rd., Ithaca. 257-0200.

ESSAY WRITING/CRITICAL THINKING TUTOR – Former English Professor - 40 Years' Experience - writingtutor1957@gmail.com

FULL DAY PRESCHOOL for 3-5 year olds. Downtown Ithaca Children's Center. Downtown Ithaca. 272-7117.

ELIZABETH ANN CLUNE Montessori School of Ithaca now accepting applications for enrollment. Call 277-7335.

NOW REGISTERING STUDENTS K-7 at Tikkun v'Or Religious School and Gan Shalom Pre-School. info@tikkunvor.org

Wanted to Buy

SELL KIDS' CLOTHES (Sizes 0-14) at 269-0600 www.mamagooseithaca.com

SELL HOME ITEMS & FURNITURE at Mimi's Attic, 882-9038 www.mimisatticithaca.com

Foster Family

Become a Foster Parent

To anyone who may be considering becoming a foster parent and/or adoptive parent and wants more information, Tompkins County Department of Social Services has a significant need for homes for children of all ages and sibling groups.

If you desire further information, please call 274-5266

Home

SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE WAREHOUSE: Great resource for old house parts, such as recycled doors, lighting, hardware, tubs and lots more. 212 Center St. Ithaca. 607-277-3450 www.significantelements.org

Mark L. Thomas Septic Service
"We MT Your Tank"
90 Pleasant Hollow Rd.,
Freeville, NY 13068
• Septic & Grease Pumping
• Minor Repairs & Inspections
• Quality, Friendly Service
607-539-7842
or 272-6038

ENGRAVING: Make it special with custom engraving! Plaques, Trophies, Awards, Ribbons, Medallions, Badges, Signs. A&B Awards and Engraving. info@abawards.com 607-227-2360.

Health

MATERNITY & PEDIATRICS. Chiropractic Wellness Care. Also Treating Sports & Repetitive Use Injuries. Board Certified. Natural Health Family Chiropractic. 277-1468.

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED for your children's health care. Accepting new patients. Buttermilk Pediatrics 272-6880.

NORTHEAST PEDIATRICS & ADOLESCENT MEDICINE in TOMPKINS COUNTY 10 Graham Road West, Ithaca or 1290 Trumansburg Rd., Ithaca. Pediatrics 257-2188 • Adolescent Medicine 257-5067 • West office 319-5211

Photography

FAMILY PORTRAITS, WEDDING & RESUME PHOTOS. Call Studio 97 Photography by Kathy Morris 277-5656.

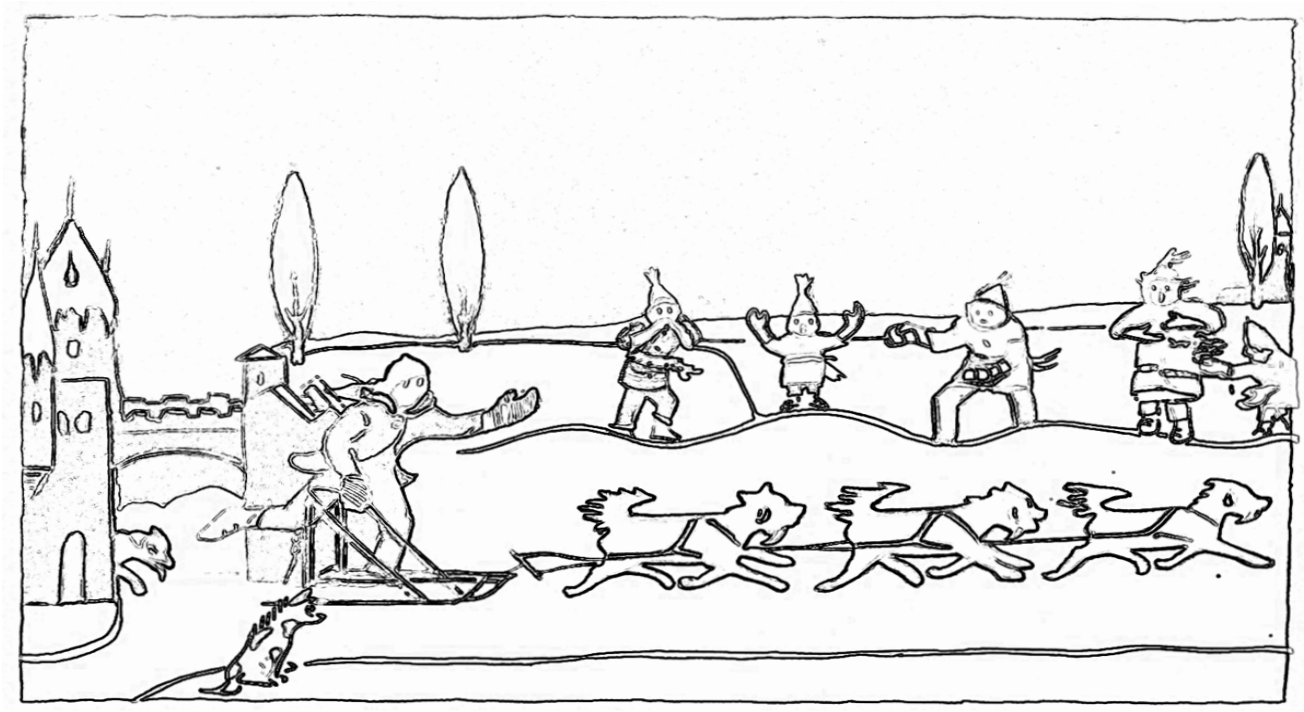
SELL YOUR 'STUFF'!

We'll post it, sell it or just announce it for only $5! (per 10 words)
Mail to Ithaca Child Classifieds PO Box 242 Etna NY 13062, fax at 347-4302, or print this form off our website at www.ithacachild.net

1. **Category**:_____
2. **Message**:_____
_____
_____
3. **Place in Issues**: ___Spring *by 1/22* ___Summer *by 4/8*
___Finger Lakes Family Fun *by 5/21* ___Back to School *by 7/29*
___Family Services Dir. *by 9/17* ___Winter *by 10/28*
4. **Choose:** Line Classified ad: $5/10 words (25¢ for each additional word)
and/or Display Classified ad = $15.00 per column inch (One Column: 2 3/8" wide)
5. **Total Enclosed**: _____
6. We cannot print your ad without the following information. It will be kept strictly confidential.
Name:_____ Ph:_____
Address:_____

Enter to Win in Ithaca Child's Coloring Contest & Giveaway

Win gift certificates to: **Alphabet Soup; Cayuga Chamber Orchestra; GreenStar Co-op; Ithaca Ballet; and The Cat's Pajamas**



Instructions:

Kids, color the picture and have your parents fill out the form below then ask them to mail it to: Ithaca Child, PO Box 242, Etna, NY 13062. You can also bring it to the Ithaca Child drop box at the Alternatives Federal Credit Union, 125 N. Fulton St. Ithaca; or print this form off of our website at: www.ithacachild.net

Deadline to enter: December 16, 2026

No purchase necessary to win. Winners will be chosen in a random drawing and may be listed in a future issue of Ithaca Child. One entry per child please. Prize quantities are limited. Early entries may receive prizes early for offers with a limited time for use. A parent's email address is requested as some gifts may involve awarding paperless tickets. No contact info will be sold and no additional solicitations will be made.

Child's Name & Age:_____ Parent's Name:_____

Mailing Address:_____Parent's email:_____

City:_____State:_____Zip:_____ Pone:_____

the paper for parents
ITHACA CHILD

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ITHACA CHILD

Save the Date!
Ithaca Child's Annual
Spring issue
will be on newsstands early February.
Advertising & Calendar
deadline is 1/22/27.
For more info call
607-327-1226 or email
jgraney@twcny.rr.com

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of nypenn pathways

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