

# singleparent101

September/October 2009

magazine

**CHOOSING THE  
RIGHT STYLE FOR SCHOOL**

**LOCAL TRAVEL & BIKING**

**REMARRIAGE &  
BLENDING STEPFAMILIES**

**Food &  
Spice Up Your Life**

**TEEN DRIVING SAFETY**

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**Buzz Aldrin**  
Magnificent Desolation: The Long Journey from the Moon



**Maureen McCormick**  
Here's The Story: Surviving Marcia Brady and Finding My True Voice



**David Levithan**  
Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist



**Chris Gardner**  
Start Where You Are: Life Lessons in Getting from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be



**Tory Johnson**  
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**Amiri Baraka**  
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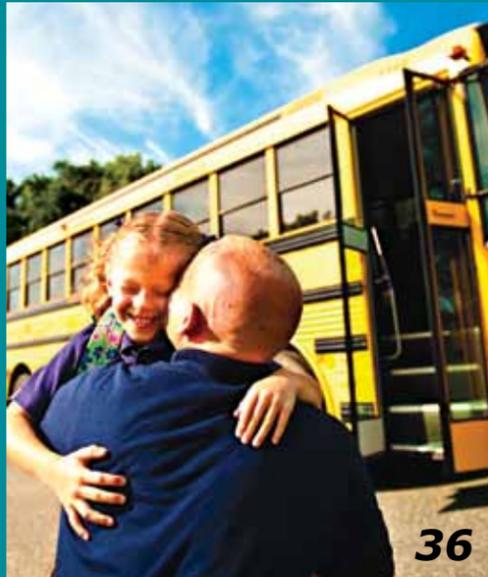
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Photo by: Pete Albert

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Team meetings are important to the success of *Single Parent 101 Magazine*. Without that interaction, communication and exchange of ideas, we wouldn't have a vibrant and relevant product for you to enjoy and from which to gather information. You also need a team to lean on. You need support and suggestions on the successful paths others have taken in similar situations. Let us be part of your team.

It's easy to sit at my desk and make decisions. I'm always right, aren't I? It is only in hindsight that we might discover how horribly wrong an arbitrary decision was. Even what I would consider a well thought-out decision could turn out badly if I miss a relatively small element that can affect the outcome.

How do we know who to listen to and when? Whether it's in business or as a single parent, we rely on our own education, instincts and experiences. That has to account for a solid base upon which to build your decision-making abilities. That base is only enhanced by input from others. You can filter that information—you can disagree with some of it, but don't completely block it out.

I usually wear a business suit. Does that make my decisions any more valid? I recently participated in

a seminar with other attendees from different walks of life but we shared a common interest. Two other participants in jeans and tee-shirts brought insights and solutions to a problem that I would not have considered because I had blinders on and was too focused on my particular functions. If I had blocked them out for whatever reason, we would not have come up with the improved recommendations that we made.

As single parents, we may not have many opportunities to find the "other participants with a shared interest." That's why *Single Parent 101 Magazine* exists. Whether you look on us as part of your team or another participant, we are here to help.

I have to admit that some of this is also fun. Go back to our cover photo. These are not professional models. This is a single parent and his daughter sharing with us the joy of their relationship without any compensation for their time. The school bus was donated for the shot. Mom arrived after a few photos had already been taken and chastised us for not having the proper ribbons in her daughter's hair. (She brought the right colors.) See what happens when the man makes a decision without any help? I think I'm allowed to say that since my own style decisions can be atrocious.

Our contributing authors are not professional writers. Each of them has come to us and volunteered to share with you their thoughts and words of encouragement. Your health and happiness is important to each one of us. When you have read this issue, we hope you'll find yourself in a better place. Whether you come out with one positive thought or a brand new direction, we are successful if we have contributed to that change. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your life.

*Francis H. Roudiez*  
Publisher



photo: Laura Olson

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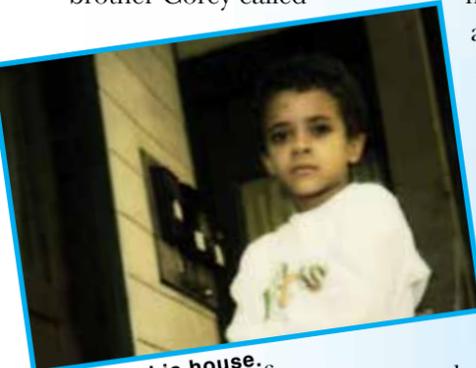
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# Joyful Parenting

By Steve Gross, Founder & Director, Project Joy

I'm not a parent but I certainly have experienced the joy of being one, thanks to a boy who goes by the strange name of "Mookie."

I got to know Mookie 10 years ago when his older brother Corey called



Mookie at his house.

me from prison and asked me to keep an eye on his little brother while he was away. I had coached Corey in basketball as a teenager. Corey had exchanged his high tops

for weapons on the mean streets of inner city Boston. While in prison, his chief concern was for his little brother Claude Eugene (aka Mookie) whom he believed desperately needed a father figure (Mookie never met his father).

I was working at a summer day camp in suburban Boston. The camp's owner, Dr. John Cloninger, generously offered Mookie a scholarship to the camp and, in the summer of 2000, Mookie became one of my campers.

Mook did pretty well at camp – with the exception of an occasional fight or two – and soon found it to be a nice little home away from home that summer. But the hardest part about camp for Mookie was getting there. His mom—a loving, single parent fighting poverty—had trouble getting him to the



Mookie and Corey, 1993

bus stop in the morning and, as a result, Mookie missed a lot of camp time.

I asked Mook's mom if he could stay at my house on certain evenings so that we could commute to camp together.

It was fun having this little 9 year old with big eyes, a big 'fro and an even bigger smile as my roommate. We went out for dinner, saw movies that I would never have seen without him, played video games (John Madden Football to be exact), played catch and talked. Mookie became the little brother that I had always wanted.

At the end of the summer, our relationship changed. He got busy with school and sports and I had gotten married and was adjusting to my new life as a husband. As a result, Mookie only stayed with me (and my new wife Kerrie) sporadically on weekends.

But now, instead of us spending quality "guy time" together, we began to feel more like a little family. Now, instead of spending only carefree summer days together, Mookie, Kerrie and I had to deal with the realities of life for a 9-year-old boy – homework, report cards and even the occasional call from the principal's office (word of advice to kids out there—never roll your eyes at a Spanish teacher with a chip on her shoulder).

Around this time, Mookie and his mom began having some difficulties getting along. They began to fight frequently and Mookie's behavior in school (and at home) began to deteriorate. Frustrated, concerned and motivated by her immense love for her son, Mookie's mom asked if he could live with Kerrie and me for awhile. She believed that a change of scenery—one with a little more structure and resources—might be just what he needed.

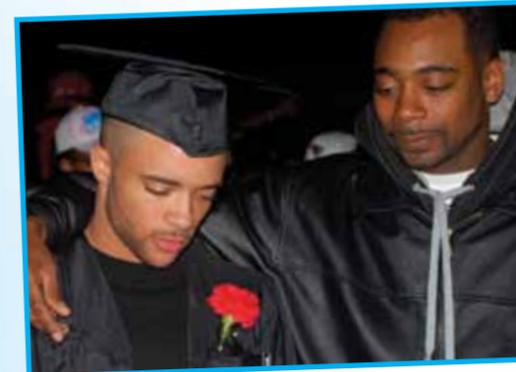
I asked Mookie if he was up for living with us for a while. He said, "Sure, as long as I can see my



Mookie and Steve on a Roller Coaster

mom sometimes." We assured him that he could see her everyday if he wanted and so began this new chapter in all of our lives.

Kerrie is blond and Irish Catholic, I'm Jewish and Mook is African American. We obviously did not look like a "typical family" and outsiders had questions—questions that could be awkward for a young kid to answer. Once I walked into Mookie's room while he was talking to one of his girlfriends at school when I could tell by the flow of the conversation that she had asked, "Who's that?" Mook stuttered and mumbled something about "this guy I live with" and I knew that it



Mookie and Corey, 2003

was time to talk.

I asked Mookie later that evening how he thought we should answer this question. I

explained that I could be his friend, his big brother, his uncle, his dad or I'd even be cool with being called "some guy."

Mookie thought about it for awhile and said, "I think I want you to be my dad." That was one of the proudest days of my life.

I became a dad that day. I didn't have the birth certificate, adoption papers or big 'fro to prove it. Instead, I had the love and trust of my son. That was good enough for me.



Steve and Corey, 2008



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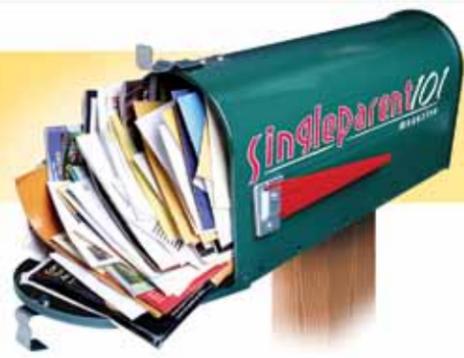
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# Letters To The Editor



I'm a single mom who walked out on my kids' father when they were just four and five. At that time, I was living in Jamaica and I immigrated to the U.S. in 2001. Life is a struggle every day, but I have two wonderful children whom I have to set example and be a role model for.

When I first moved here, I worked at McDonald's so that I could support us. In 2002, I started working at a college doing housekeeping. I've been there since. I have been trying to get my GED since 2002 so I can get a better job and go to college. I passed all subjects except math, so now I'm working on that. In the meantime, I went to a radio school – I now have a broadcasting diploma – and want to pursue a career in journalism or as a counselor, but have to get the high school diploma. Both my children will be attending college this fall, so that gives me time to get my GED and go to college.

I've been through a lot but I never ever think about giving up. I can't. I am not where I want to be – not yet. So much has happened since 2008. I've had my home broken into, and they tried again three months later. Then, my apartment burned, my daughter had back surgery, and I've been in the hospital twice for five days since August of 2008. My son just lost the tip of his right thumb – the hand he uses – and I filed for bankruptcy. I can't get credit, my car broke down, but I'm never giving up. It's making me fight even harder to achieve my goal of making life better for me and my children.

Name Withheld  
Albany, N.Y.

My name is Calli, age 8, and I know how it feels to be separate. Take my brother, for example. He's someone called a "go with the flow" person so it's easier for that type of person. But if you are like me, then just love your parents the way they are. However, I always want to be with both parents and wish they were together.

Calli  
8 yrs. old

## Write us!

Single Parent 101 Magazine welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be original, signed by the author and include a street address and daytime telephone number for verification. Letters may be no more than 300 words. Write Us or e-mail to [letters@singleparent101mag.com](mailto:letters@singleparent101mag.com)



## Correction

The photographer for the cover of our July/August issue was Sue Murray. We regret our error in not properly attributing this wonderful photograph.

# Planning For Your Financial Future

By Todd Wilhoit, Investment Planner

A single parent faces many challenges each day. One of the challenges is what to do about the finances. Where do I start? What should I know? What do I need? Where does the money come from? The start of the school year is an appropriate time to look at a few of these questions and issues to make sure you are moving forward and getting on track for a sound financial future.

## Begin with a budget

Don't know where to begin? First, gather all of your most recent statements from all financial accounts. These include bank account statements, 401k statements, IRA statements, credit card statements, and life insurance statements to name a few. Once all of your statements are together, you can analyze your overall situation by creating a simple diagram using two columns. The first column will list your assets and the second will list your liabilities (debts). This will allow you to see just how things look in comparable tabular format. This will also allow you to begin creating a budget.

## Your budget should focus on three major sections:

1. Paying your monthly bills. You should have this number by looking at the liabilities section from above.
2. Paying yourself. Start off by opening up an emergency fund (savings account) and making sure you have money each month going into this account. You should try to build this up to cover at least six months of living expenses. The emergency fund is a critical part to your financial freedom. Once this has been accomplished, you can start looking at other savings alternatives such as an IRA, 401k, 529 plans, etc. Make sure the alternative options are discussed with a qualified professional before making any decisions.
3. Paying down your debt. Make sure that you start with the highest interest accounts first and, once that account is paid off, move on from there.

## Update or create your will

After completing your budget, the next critical avenue is one that most parents in general tend to overlook – updating or creating your will. This is an essential piece of your long-term financial strategy as a family. This document should be a big part of a single parent's life. It allows you to decide who will take care of your child if something happens to you. It will also designate a person to control your estate and support your children. Most single parents do not realize that, if this document is not in place, the courts will make these very important decisions for the deceased parent. When completing this document, consult with an attorney who focuses in the area of estate planning.

## Look at your life insurance coverage

Once you have completed your will, you should look at your life insurance coverage. Life insurance is another area of your overall financial package that is often overlooked. Life insurance will give you the peace of mind that your children will be able to live the lifestyle you envision for them. Schedule a meeting with your agent or financial planner to discuss not only how much insurance is needed, but what type would best fit your situation and goals for the future.

## Update your plan yearly

The information listed above outlines just a few steps in a long process toward a healthy financial future. Make sure that each year the plan is updated and changes are made to reflect the many changes that life brings. As always, take the time to schedule an appointment with a qualified financial professional to help with the ongoing process. With the hectic life of a single parent, the professional can make sure the plan is designed for your situation and walk you through each step.



illustration: Timothy Young



# How Can Parents Help Their Children Avoid the Credit Card Trap?

By Shellie Monroe

President/CEO of Parents Empowering Families & Communities

College seniors have credit card debt totaling more than \$7,000 each. When they graduate, they still have an average balance on their credit card of \$4,000.

According to a recent study by Sallie Mae, the nation's leading provider of student loans, 84 percent of undergraduates have at least one credit card and 50 percent of college students have four or more cards.

These are grim statistics. We send our children to college to attain an education, not to amass credit card debt. Unfortunately, when we visit college campuses and peruse their websites, we are not forewarned about the credit card trap that awaits our sometimes financially illiterate and overly naive children.

Many college campuses have agreements with credit card issuers that authorize them to market to students, faculty and alumni. In return, universities provide detailed contact information and receive money.

While attending college, children have the "opportunity" to begin their downward spiral into the abyss of credit card debt. In exchange they get freebies (t-shirts, hats, cups, Frisbees or pizza), that cost credit card issuers mere pennies. Although credit card companies have targeted children for many years, the rules are about to change.

In an effort to protect children from the credit card piranhas, President Obama recently signed the Credit CARD (Card Accountability, Responsibility and Disclosure) Act of 2009. This legislation will become effective Feb. 22, 2010. Some of the changes include:

- Pre-screened credit card offers cannot be sent to anyone younger than 21 years old.
- Credit card issuers cannot extend credit to anyone under 21 years of age unless one of the following conditions is met: (1) the minor is able to prove that he/she has the "independent" financial ability to repay the credit, or (2) a parent, legal guardian, or someone 21 or older agrees to co-sign the application.

Co-signers are equally responsible for all of the incurred debt.

- Minors with co-signers must obtain the co-signer's permission to increase the credit limit.

- Credit card issuers are prohibited from offering freebies if students sign up for credit cards on or "near" campus or

college-sponsored events.

- Colleges must disclose the details of their credit card company contracts and credit card issuers must file an annual report with the Federal Reserve Board.

Although Congress has established legislation to help our children avoid the credit card trap, the following list is provided to help you complement the government's efforts.

1. Pay attention to your own financial habits. Regardless of what we say, children mimic what we do.
2. Open a savings account for each of your children (the sooner, the better). Encourage them to save their money as soon as they receive their first penny.
3. Explain the difference between "needs" versus "wants" and "instant gratification" versus "delayed gratification." Instead of shouting, "We can't afford it!" or, "I'm not buying that!" take the time to explain why you spend money the way you do. For example, explain to your children that instead of spending \$40 for your family to eat out, you are choosing to spend \$10 on a home-cooked meal so that the remaining \$30 can go toward the electric bill.
4. Explain debit card versus credit card purchases. Make sure your children understand that debit card purchases are immediately deducted from a checking account and credit card purchases are loans that, if not repaid in full when the bill arrives, will have to be repaid with interest.
5. Enroll your children (and yourself) in financial literacy classes. Various community organizations offer financial literacy classes, either for free or for a nominal cost.
6. Provide adolescents with an allowance they are responsible for managing. Establish a payment amount, payment schedule, and specify any items they are/are not responsible for purchasing. Make it clear that under no circumstance will you provide an advance between "pay periods." As adults, we do not have a genie that grants our every financial wish, nor do we have supervisors who provide us with paychecks on an as-needed basis. The sooner adolescents learn to manage their money, the better.
7. Step back and allow financial missteps to happen. You are not going to approve of every item your children purchase. Aside from something harmful

and/or illegal, let them spend the money on an item they want and allow them to experience the ramifications when they do not have money left for a more desired item. When parents step in and rescue children from their financial boo-boos, the children miss an opportunity to learn valuable financial lessons that will serve them well for many years.

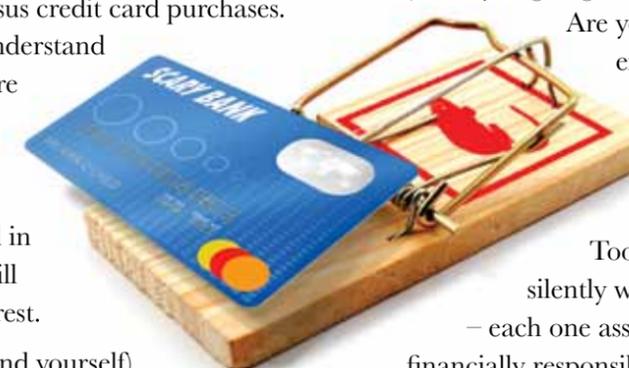
8. Expose adolescents to the real world of financial responsibilities. Include your teens in the bill paying process – show them the monthly bills and allow them to watch you pay them. Although it will take you longer to complete this task, this is an excellent teaching opportunity. Many teens do not know that most of the items they use daily (e.g., hot water, air conditioning/heat, electricity, telephone and cable) are not free!

9. Devise and communicate a plan for expensive items (e.g., car, post-secondary education, wedding, etc.). Are you going to pay for your children's first car?

Are you going to pay for their college expenses, or will they need to obtain loans? Are you going to support them financially while they attend college, or will they need to work?

Too often, adolescents and parents silently work under various assumptions – each one assuming the other will be financially responsible for various expenses. Devise a plan and convey it often.

10. Contact your local legislative officials and encourage them to mandate financial literacy within the public school curriculum. It is unfortunate that children graduate from high school (not to mention college) with very little financial literacy. In 2008, the Maryland General Assembly established the Task Force to Study How to Improve Financial Literacy in the State (SB 533/HB 1242). The Task Force studies the financial literacy challenges facing students. It examines how well high school students understand basic financial concepts, evaluates the financial literacy education provided in Maryland schools, and assesses the usefulness of a financial literacy curriculum in primary and secondary education. A report is expected to Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley on or before Dec. 1, 2009.



# BREAST CANCER SCREENING:

Who,  
What,  
When?

By: Helen E. Mrose, MD PhD

**Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women (except for skin cancer), and it is one of the leading causes of cancer death in women.**

Many women who do not have a family history of breast cancer choose to forego breast screening examinations due to the mistaken assumption that they are not at risk for the disease.

**All women are at risk for breast cancer; more than 85 percent of breast cancer diagnoses are in women with no family history of the disease.**

*The single most important risk factor for breast cancer is being female.* The probability of developing breast cancer increases with increasing age, so that women living to age 85 have a 1 in 8 chance of developing the disease.

## How is breast screening done?

There are many ways to image body parts, including plain film X-ray, ultrasound, CT scan, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and nuclear medicine techniques. Mammography is the *only* imaging tool that has been proven to reduce mortality from breast cancer, although it is not the only tool available for detecting breast cancer.

## What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breasts, using specialized equipment designed for this purpose only. The newest mammography technology currently available is *digital mammography*.

With digital technology, images are captured electronically instead of on film. The digital mammogram machine looks virtually identical to the older film-screen mammography machine, and a digital mammogram should feel exactly the same as the film-screen mammogram technology, since breast compression is just as necessary as it was previously. Breast compression is the single most important factor in obtaining high quality images—whether the images are captured on film or digitally—since high detail and low radiation exposures depend on making the breast as thin as possible.

**Digital mammography offers significant technical advantages over film-screen mammography,** including that:

- 1) imaging can be completed more quickly,
- 2) there are fewer repeat exposures due to the more sophisticated technology,
- 3) images can be optimized electronically to allow diagnosis of small tumors,
- 4) images can never be “lost,” and
- 5) radiation exposure to the patient can be reduced by up to 40 percent.

A recent multicenter breast cancer screening trial (DMIST) compared digital mammography with film-screen mammography in 49,528 women. Digital mammography was found to be significantly superior to film-screen mammography for breast cancer detection in women under the age of 50, perimenopausal women and in women with dense breasts (dense means more connective tissue than fatty tissue). This cannot be determined by visual inspection or physical exam, but only with imaging.



## What is the goal of screening mammography?

The goal of screening is to detect breast tumors that are very small—too small to be felt by physical examination—since this is when they are most often curable. Screening mammography is for women who do not have a breast symptom or problem.

## Who should have a mammogram, and when?

The American Cancer Society and the American College of Radiology recommend that all women undergo yearly mammography screening beginning at age 40. Although there has been controversy in the past about screening women under the age of 50, there is compelling evidence that screening women in their 40s is effective. It is most effective when performed annually, since breast tumors tend to grow more quickly in younger women. Thus, to find tumors when small and curable, mammography screening is most effective when done yearly.

## What about screening for women who are at “high risk” for breast cancer?

First it is important to define who is at high risk. The following situations place a woman at “high risk” for breast cancer:

- Personal history of breast cancer
- Personal history of atypical hyperplasia or lobular neoplasia
- First-degree relative who developed premenopausal breast cancer
- Multiple relatives with breast or ovarian cancer
- BRCA gene mutation
- History of radiation to the chest between the ages of 10 and 30

**If a woman is under the age of 40 and at “high risk,” we will recommend that yearly breast screening begin before age 40.**

The age to begin screening young women at high risk should be decided on a case by case basis. For instance, if a woman’s mother or sister had premenopausal breast cancer, we recommend screening begin 5-10 years before the age the relative was at diagnosis (but not before age 25). For those with BRCA mutations, screening is recommended to begin between ages 25-30.

**Breast MRI** is usually recommended in addition to mammography in those at high risk. MRI has been found to be more sensitive than mammography for demonstrating breast cancers, but it is also a non-specific test (many false positive tests).

Neither breast MRI or mammography is 100 percent effective for breast cancer detection, and we recommend that they be used together for women in the high risk category. It is recommended that screening be done with mammography, except for women who are under the age of 25; for this group, MRI is recommended, to avoid radiation exposure. One of the reasons that mammography is not performed routinely in those under the age of 40 is due to the amount of radiation involved with a mammogram.

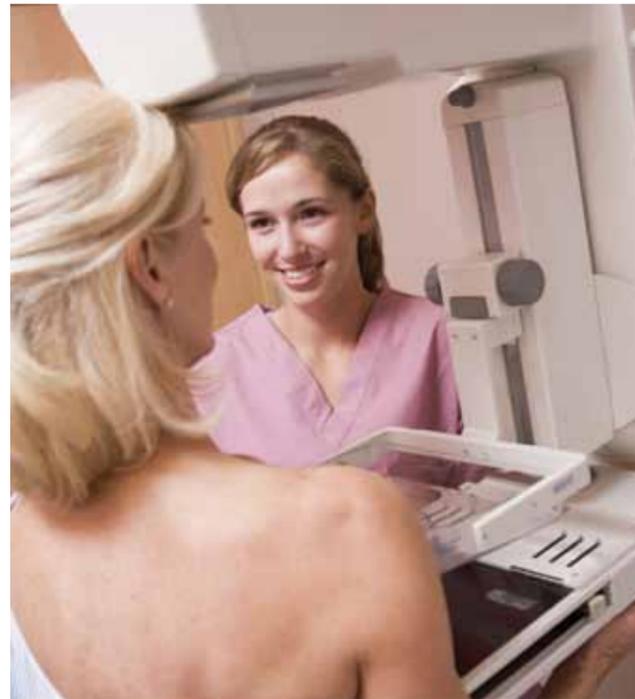
**Screening mammography** is for women without a new breast symptom, such as a lump or other change in breast exam. The goal of screening is to find breast cancer before it is large enough to be felt (when it likely will be curable). Women with any breast problem (such as a new lump, skin changes, or history of a recent abnormal breast imaging study) should have a “diagnostic mammogram,” which is a “problem-solving” study. Diagnostic mammography is checked by the radiologist before the patient leaves the imaging department, and may include non-standard mammography views and/or ultrasound. Optimally, an answer will be given at the time that study is completed.

**If you have a breast lump, you must let someone know this at the time of your mammogram. The reason is that some cancers are not visible on a routine mammogram. Special imaging, including ultrasound, should always be done if there is a new lump.**

Most lumps are not cancerous. Cysts, which are fluid filled sacs in the breast, are the most common cause of a lump (and these occur most commonly in women between 35 and 50). Ultrasound can show if a lump is comprised of fluid, physical examination cannot. If a new lump is solid, rather than fluid, it may require biopsy, depending on its imaging features.

#### **Where should I go for my mammogram?**

Mammography is a difficult examination to perform well, regardless of whether digital equipment or



film-screen equipment is used. Image quality differs quite dramatically from site to site. All mammography facilities are required to be federally qualified and registered (MQSA). However, the manner in which the mammography equipment is used varies tremendously. Mammography quality is best when performed by technologists with subspecialized training, working under the direct supervision of a radiologist who specializes in mammography.

#### **What is the role of ultrasound?**

Ultrasound is an imaging tool that utilizes sound waves. Thus, there is no radiation involved. Studies have shown that using mammography and ultrasound together can increase the detection rate for breast cancers in those with dense breast tissue. Breast density cannot be determined by physical exam, only by imaging studies. Younger women tend to have denser breasts than older women, but there is considerable variability.

Screening the breasts for cancer using ultrasound alone is not recommended, since ultrasound cannot detect many tumors, including many of the smallest cancers (and these tend to be the curable ones).

**Ultrasound should always be performed as part of the evaluation of a breast lump**, almost always in conjunction with mammography (except in women under the age of 30, when exposure to radiation is to be avoided).

#### **What is the role of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)?**

MRI was developed in the 1980s, and is a powerful imaging technology that utilizes a high field strength magnet, radiofrequency waves and computer technology to generate cross sectional images of the human body. In contrast to mammography, no ionizing radiation is used with MRI.

Breast MRI technology has improved dramatically over the past 10 years, and it is now possible to find tiny breast tumors that may be missed using mammography, ultrasound and physical examination.

Breast MRI for cancer diagnosis requires the use of the contrast agent gadolinium, which causes tumors to enhance or “light up” on breast scans. Studies have shown that breast MRI is more sensitive than mammography in many cases, meaning it shows more cancers.

However, not all cancers enhance on MRI; studies have shown that some cancers found by mammography do not enhance on MRI. This means that MRI should not replace mammography. In addition, MRI is so sensitive that many benign (non-cancerous) conditions also enhance, leading to many “false positive” scan results.

The American Cancer Society currently recommends that breast MRI be used in conjunction with mammography for women who are at very high risk for breast cancer (20-25 percent lifetime risk).

There are models available to calculate risk for breast cancer; genetic counselors are best able to determine who is at elevated risk. Women who have the genetic mutation BRCA1 or BRCA2 are at extremely high

risk for breast cancer, and qualify for yearly screening with mammography and MRI, usually beginning earlier than women with average risk (for whom yearly mammography screening beginning at 40 is recommended).

**Breast MRI is also recommended for women with a new diagnosis of breast cancer, to help with surgical planning.**

Breast MRI requires a high field strength magnet, a specialized “breast coil,” and the use of gadolinium. High quality MRI imaging is difficult to obtain, requiring experienced personnel and meticulous attention to detail in addition to excellent equipment. No matter how good the quality of the images, the diagnostic accuracy depends on the expertise of the radiologist interpreting the MRI. I recommend that if you need breast MRI, you seek a site in which the study will be read by an MQSA qualified breast imaging radiologist.

Mammography is still the “gold standard” for screening for breast cancer. Whether other imaging modalities should be used depends on multiple factors. Each woman should discuss her situation with her healthcare provider and her breast radiologist, if necessary, to ensure appropriate imaging and care.



hope—research—cure

SUPPORTING BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

Like the intertwining lines of the Celtic knot, these three words signify the eternal hope for the cure of breast cancer.

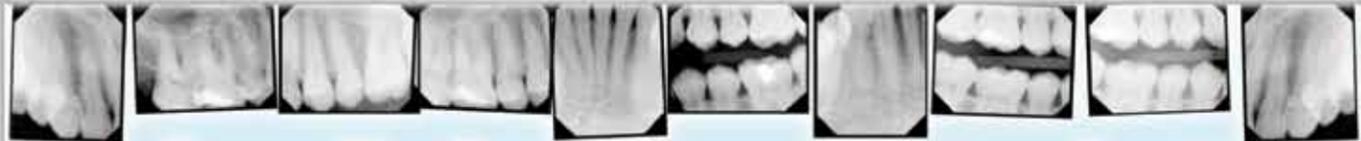
October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and we are pleased to present our limited-edition Pink Ribbon of Life necklace.

Wear it for your mother, your daughter, your sister or your friend and show your support in the quest for the prevention and cure of breast cancer.

**IRISH TRADITIONS**

*Proceeds from the sale of this item will be donated to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.*

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## Why Does My Child Keep Getting Cavities?

By Eugene McNinch, DDS and Ryan Maisel, DDS

Many parents get frustrated when their child has dental problems despite doing what they feel is a good job with their child's dental hygiene. In a nutshell, the obvious things a parent should practice with their children are brushing their teeth minimally two times a day, flossing at least once a day and limiting sugar-filled foods and drinks.

As a single parent, it may seem impossible to maintain optimal oral home care—especially when your child visits his/her other parent or grandparents who may not adequately regulate these things. Naturally, chasing down more than one child each day for

kid's trick-or-treat bags. The key is limit how much candy the children eat and to brush and floss after they are done. Certain types of candy cause more decay, such as sticky/chewy candy like caramel or fruit roll-ups (it gives oral bacteria sugar to feed on for hours after consumption in the fissures or grooves of teeth) and hard candy that



it is not possible for your child to brush afterward, make sure he or she swishes some of the excess sugar out with water.

**Limit intake of acidic foods and drinks.** When sodas and fruit juices, such as orange and tomato juice, are sipped over long periods of time, they can demineralize (weaken) or erode enamel, making teeth more prone to decay.

Avoid sippy cups. These provide a constant exposure of sugary fluids throughout the day.

Also, never give a bottle or sippy cup with juice or milk to a child at bedtime because it will increase sugar and acid exposure on teeth for hours after consumption.

**Demonstrate healthy habits for your child.** Of course, we all have to live a little, but the key to lower decay rates is limiting exposure to sugars and diligent oral home care.

*In a nutshell, the obvious things a parent should practice with their children are brushing their teeth minimally two times a day, flossing at least once a day and limiting sugar-filled foods and drinks.*

this exponentially heightens this workload. We all need to be realistic, of course, but every bit of effort helps.

We preach several simple concepts regarding caries (decay) prevention to parents all the time.

**Limit candy intake.** We'll be the first to admit that we allow our children to enjoy candy from time to time. It is always comical at Halloween when people who know we are dentists don't think they are allowed to drop a candy bar into one of our

is sucked on for long periods of time such as lollipops (these give a longer term sugar source equal to sucking on sugar cubes).

**Avoid sodas and limit sugar-filled drinks.** Much like sucking on hard candy, sodas are a carrier of sugars to teeth surfaces, especially in between teeth. If you're going to treat your child to a sugary drink, don't allow him or her to sip it over a couple of hours. Offer it with a meal to limit the amount of sugar exposure to your child's teeth. If

## A Message from the United Way of Queen Anne's County!



Carllene Hurd  
2009 - 2010 President

As the incoming President for the United Way of Queen Anne's County, I am proud of our United Way's record of forwarding 100% of designated donations.

If you send the United Way of Queen Anne's County a donation and specifically request that we forward it to one

of our twenty-four approved agencies, there is no administrative percentage deducted from your contribution! Of course, we do have administrative costs, but so far we have been able to cover those costs through fundraisers or general donations.

Your contributions are vitally important to the non-profit agencies that we have investigated and determined that they offer services that are both unique and vital. These are organizations that provide integral support to those in need: for people of all ages as well as helping our environment.

Without your support through us, these agencies would not be able to provide their critical services to our community. Often, the United Way is the agency's prime source of funding. These agencies assist individuals devastated by the economic recession, provide recreation-

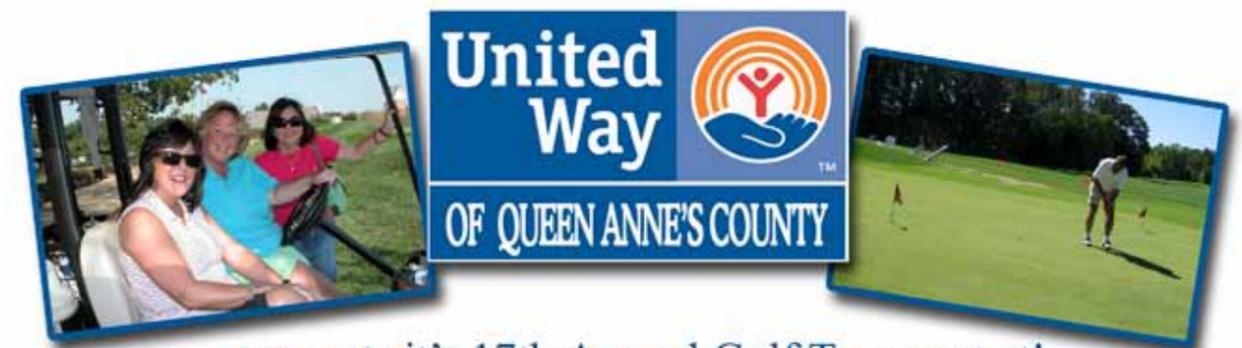
al facilities for our youth and care for the Chesapeake Bay.

Non-profits are some of the toughest hit by this recession and yet their need for support is greater than ever. So, when you receive your pledge drive mailing, please take a moment and think about those around you who are struggling. Give what you can and, if you designate, do so with the knowledge that your local United Way will forward 100% of your donation!

If you have any questions regarding the United Way of Queen Anne's County, please don't hesitate to contact me at (410) 643-4191 or by calling our Executive Director, Sandra Early, at 410-643-3982 or by emailing [admin@unitedwayqac.org](mailto:admin@unitedwayqac.org)

**Remember...during these tough times we need to LIVE UNITED!**

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**LIVE UNITED**

# YOGA

## A Path to Mind Body Heart Spirit Wellness.

By Linda Ciotola M.Ed.,CHES, TEP

**Are you stressed out? Do you get sick easily? Do small stresses of everyday single parenthood get blown out of proportion? Consider yoga as a solution for your physical and emotional well-being, without medicine or costly exercise equipment.**

Single parents juggling multiple roles and demanding schedules are turning to this 5,000-year-old solution to bring balance into their lives while also reaping a myriad of physical benefits.

Today, yoga is practiced at gyms, yoga centers, health clubs, recreation centers and dance studios. People are drawn to yoga for a variety of reasons—from athletes looking for improvement in flexibility, to patients sent by their doctors for help in easing back discomfort, to exercisers seeking improvement in strength, balance and posture.

### Come as You Are

You don't need special equipment for yoga, just wear comfortable clothing and go barefoot. Yoga uses a "sticky mat." You can create optional props such as yoga blocks, straps and bolsters from recycled books, scarves, belts and blankets. Minimal space is needed and music is optional. This small financial investment has big returns in the currency of wellness.

### Calm the Stress

Chronic stress can result in elevated heart rate, rapid shallow breathing and elevated blood pressure. This contributes to a compromised immune system, sleep and appetite disturbances, mood swings, muscle pain, headaches, exhaustion and other health problems.



Yoga calms the stress response in a number of ways. The breathing pattern of yoga—inhaling and exhaling through the nose—sends a message to the nervous system to calm down. Breathing is synchronized with the asanas (yoga's physical postures) to focus concentration, clear the mind and encourage a state of alert relaxation. Regular practice is designed to prepare for meditation.

### Transform Your Life

Recent research on meditation proves what ancient yogis and yoginis have always known—that regular practice of yoga and meditation is transformative. Brain scans show that those who meditate regularly have an increase in alpha and theta brain waves, which indicate deep relaxation and calm alertness. These effects help mediate anxiety and depression and generate feelings of compassion and well being.

### Elevate Your Mood

This modern brain technology shows that an individual's brain has a natural "set point" for good and bad moods, with greater activity on the right side of the brain associated with stress, anxiety and worry. Research suggests that regular meditation (one hour per day, six days per week) can positively shift this emotional set point while also boosting immunity. Most students new to meditation have difficulty sitting still for more than five minutes, so starting with a physical activity such as yoga prepares the mind and body for quiet stillness.

### Discover Your Personal Yoga Style

The practice of yoga, called Hatha yoga, meaning "union of opposites," offers a number of options from the power, strength and endurance emphasis of Astringa yoga—to the more meditative Kripalu to the dynamic and precise Iyengar to the shakra-centered Kundalini. Sample a variety of styles through drop-in classes, rental DVDs and online web-casts to discover your best style, both physically and temperamentally.

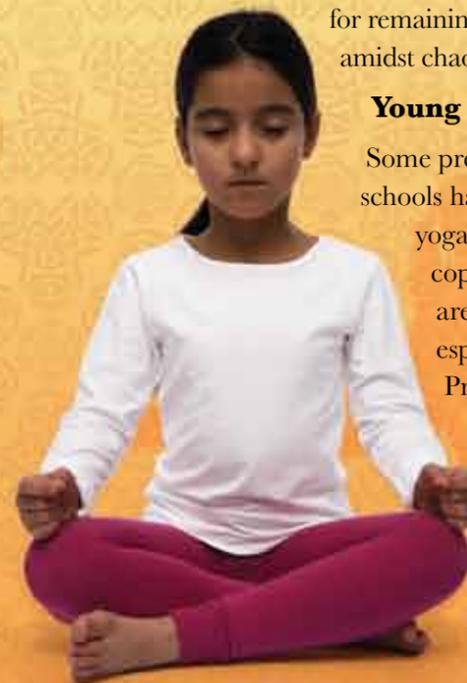
### Train Your Mind

Don't spend time regretting past events or worrying about the future. This undermines the ability to be fully present in each moment. Synchronizing movement and breath in yoga focuses the mind and trains it to "be here now."

As yoga practice deepens, so does the ability to take a step back from thoughts and feelings rather than being dominated by them. This allows space for remaining calm and centered amidst chaos and confusion.

### Young Yogis

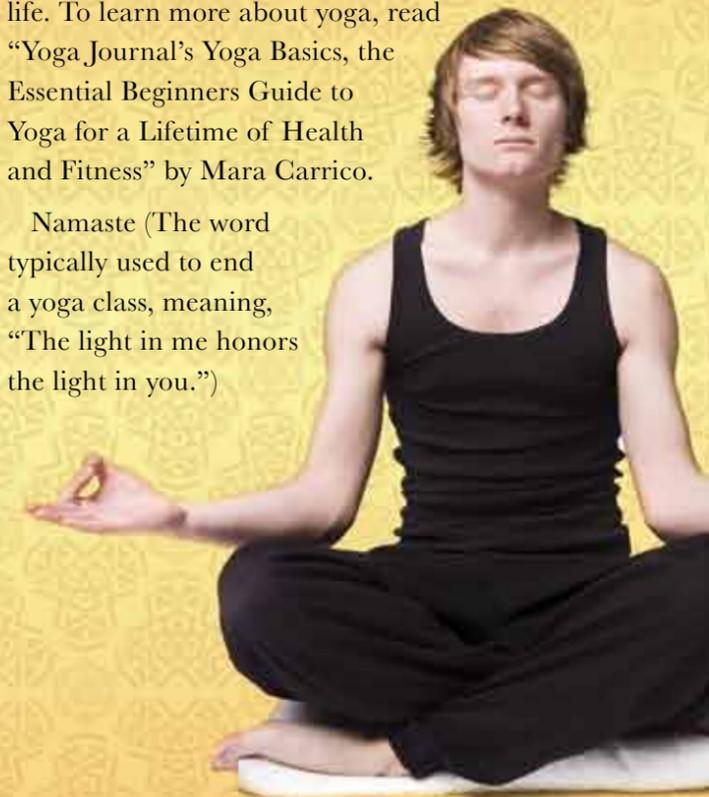
Some preschools and elementary schools have begun introducing yoga to children as a healthy coping strategy. There are yoga DVDs designed especially for children. Practicing yoga together can be a fun and rewarding parent-child activity that reinforces healthy stress management.



Whatever the original reason is that brings you to yoga, the benefits may begin with improvements in flexibility, strength and balance, while providing an oasis of calm in a hectic life. But practiced over time, yoga provides a path designed to bring balance into your life while creating physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

There are eight "limbs" on the Tree of Yoga that make up the philosophy and practice for a way of life. To learn more about yoga, read "Yoga Journal's Yoga Basics, the Essential Beginners Guide to Yoga for a Lifetime of Health and Fitness" by Mara Carrico.

Namaste (The word typically used to end a yoga class, meaning, "The light in me honors the light in you.")



- Exercise safely
- As with all forms of exercise, safety, moderation and listening to your body are key.
- If you are new to exercise or have any health concerns, check with your health care practitioner before beginning yoga.
- Never take any pose past the point of gentle tension—instead, ease off and send the breath into the place of tightness.
- Be sure to choose a class led by a qualified instructor. Instructors with in-depth training may have the letters RYT following their names, indicating they are members of the Registered Yoga Alliance. Fitness yoga instructors may have been certified by organizations such as The American Council on Exercise or similar programs.

# An Inspiring Dad

## Eric Herzberg's story as told to Single Parent 101.

By Linda Blachly, Managing Editor

For a father, the most painful part of divorce can be the loss of access to your kids. Relationships can be strained for years following the break-up of a marriage, no matter what the cause. Restoring relationships with children can take a long time.

Eric Herzberg has twice felt the pain of losing the son with his namesake—Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Eric W. Herzberg Jr. The first time, it was the result of his divorce. The second time, it was caused by a sniper bullet in Iraq in 2006. This time there's no recourse.

Looking back, Eric is very grateful that he and his son were able to restore their relationship before he deployed to Iraq at age 20. Three months later, Eric got the knock on his door the night of Oct. 21, 2006, with the sad news that his son would not be returning home.

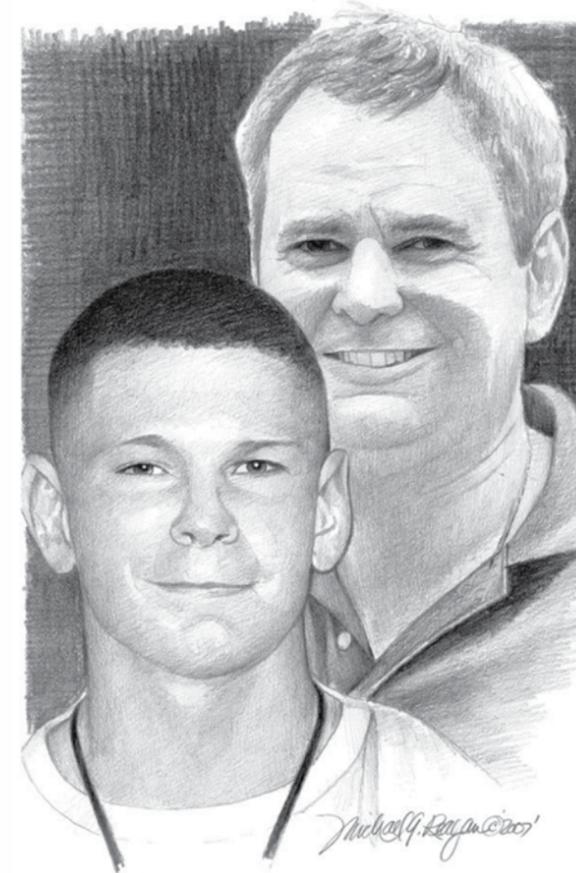
### *Eric Herzberg has twice felt the pain of losing the son with his namesake...*

"First there's shock, then uncontrollable grief," said Eric. "On a good day, it feels like a full body migraine. On a bad day, it feels like a burning ball of fire that wants to consume you."

The day of the funeral, Eric's pain was compounded when his ex-wife would not allow him to speak during the service at Arlington National Cemetery. However, Eric felt God allowed him the opportunity to share his words of love for his son through syndicated radio host Laura Ingraham. Laura unexpectedly came to the funeral and agreed to read Eric's letter on her radio program the next morning. In that tribute, Eric remembered a son who "always spoke the truth and helped to heal wounds, even those in his own family." (To hear Laura reading this tribute, link to <http://www.ericwherzberg.com/EricHerzbergTribute.mp3>.)

Eric has been determined from the beginning that grief would not consume him. Instead, drawing from his deep faith in God, he is fueled by a sense of purpose to carry on the legacy of his son.

"So many good things have come out of this," said Eric, recalling how he was contacted by his son's best friend, Justin Carman, who served with Eric Jr. in Iraq. Justin grew up without a dad, and through this tragedy, the two connected and stay in close contact.



portrait: Michael Reagan

"He even calls me dad," says Eric. Two scholarships were created to honor Eric Jr., one in Maryland and one in Florida, which Eric and Justin are proud to present to deserving students. For information, visit <http://www.ericwherzberg.com/scholarship.html>.

Another positive thing happened when Eric contacted artist Michael Reagan, who draws charcoal portraits of fallen heroes. Eric asked Michael to draw a portrait of himself with Eric Jr., and the result captured the heart and soul of his soldier son.

"What Michael does is bring a level of realism to the portrait that is amazing," said Eric. He doesn't just draw a portrait but captures the essence of the soldier—a look, a dimple, a mischievous twinkle in the eye. "There is a message with each portrait that says: 'I'm all right. I didn't suffer. I like where I am. Don't worry about me.' There is a message of calm and healing that comes with each portrait," said Eric.

Michael, a Vietnam veteran, is internationally known for his portraits of professional athletes, movie stars and world leaders. Michael has made it his mission to honor today's fallen heroes by drawing charcoal portraits of them. To date, Michael has

drawn over 1,800 portraits at the request of the families and has donated these free of charge as a measure of his love and respect for each family.

Over a year ago, Eric met Michael and discovered the artist trying to run a foundation, the Fallen Heroes Project, he created to support his efforts. Michael was doing this practically by himself while drawing two portraits each day, seven days a week. Eric offered to take over as much of the business aspects as he could. "I convinced him to reach the families directly and figured out how to get the message out. God opened doors in amazing ways," said Eric. Michael gets 25 to 30 requests per week.

What's even more compelling about Michael is that he not only draws portraits of the soldier but, in special situations, also includes family members and pets. Some of the most touching portraits are those drawn of the soldier holding a baby who never had a chance to meet his or her dad. "Can you imagine what that will mean to that child someday?" asks Eric.

That's what keeps this grieving dad going each day as he connects with family members who have also lost a loved one. He hears story after story of how the portraits comforted them in some way, such as how a grieving mother finally had her first peaceful night's sleep in over a year after she received the portrait of her beloved son.

And, for Eric, it keeps the memory of Eric Jr. alive. "He was so fearless. I have an amazing admiration for him," said Eric as he reflected on his son's personality. "He deepened his faith when he was in the Marine Corps. He had a quality and decency about him."

Eric draws his strength and new-found purpose from his son, who lived a life full of purpose and meaning. "At the end of your life, no matter how long or short, one of the highest callings is to know you made a difference. This was a wake-up call for me. When I said goodbye to Eric, I said I would finish the legacy he started – living a life of service in God's will, living a life with purpose like he did," said Eric.

For information on the Fallen Heroes Project, visit [www.fallenheroesproject.org](http://www.fallenheroesproject.org).

# An Inspiring Mom

## Shellie Monroe's story as told to Single Parent 101

*Poor choices left this single mom alone and in debt; now she inspires others to make better financial decisions*

by Natalie Slater.

"I was a hot mess. I can say it now and laugh, but back then, it was not funny," says Shellie Monroe.

"Twenty years ago, I was a headstrong teenager who knew it all," recalls Shellie. She laughs as she remembers thinking she was all grown up when she entered Morgan State University as a freshman. She was beginning her life as a carefree college student. She was finally on her own and in control of her life, or so she thought.

### All the comforts of home

Shellie was the only child of parents who had saved for her college education. She was used to a life of comfort. Her parents provided the means to pay for her entire tuition, dormitory and meal plan. No student loans, grants or scholarships – just Mom and Dad's checkbook. This is every college student's dream, right? Well, not so for Shellie when she realized she didn't have a private room and, even worse, had to share a bathroom with an entire floor of other young women. "Meal plan? There was no way was I going to eat the cafeteria food," she recalls.

### Plastic paradise?

After the first semester, Shellie decided she was going to get an apartment on her own with a friend. She made the move without talking it over with her parents. If she had, she would have known that they were not about to pay for her living expenses off campus. She was used to a comfortable style of living and used a very convenient piece of plastic to purchase furniture and decorations for her new place.

### The price of plastic

That comfortable, independent living came with a price as Shellie learned quickly. To support this new lifestyle, she found herself having to commute back and forth between a job in D.C., and school in Baltimore. Financial struggles were just beginning for her. She said her pride wouldn't allow her to ask for help. In hindsight, Shellie says, "It's OK to ask for help whether it be parents, teachers or guidance counselors."

### Marital bliss?

At 20 years old and a sophomore, Shellie married her college boyfriend. She now says she was looking for someone to validate her, fill a hole and to help bring balance. Her wedding day was business as usual. They went to the Justice of the Peace and executed their nuptials. Then she dropped her new husband off at work and went back to her apartment she shared with a friend. This was another decision that wasn't discussed with her parents. Instead, she wrote them a letter announcing her marriage.

Married life was a struggle from the beginning; they were on again and off again. During a brief time of reconciliation, Shellie became pregnant with their daughter. They were separated when Shellie found out about her pregnancy. She was then a junior in college, separated, now pregnant and with ever-increasing debt.

### Back home with baby

"After I did a lot of neck popping and finger waving, I moved back home with my parents and had my baby," Shellie remembers. "I still had the attitude that I knew so much more than they did." She completed her junior year but had to put her college ambitions on hold during her senior year when she had to focus on single parenthood.

When her daughter was 4-and-a-half years old, Shellie and her husband tried to reconcile again; however, she soon returned to live with her parents. After the inevitable divorce, her husband lost contact with both Shellie and her daughter.

### Bankruptcy

As a single mom with mounting debt, she still would not ask for help. The debt had become so unmanageable that at times she felt she couldn't breathe. Stressed out, she couldn't sleep and knew that she had to address her financial situation. Shellie tried a consolidation plan that allowed her to make one payment. This, too, became unmanageable. Her last resort was bankruptcy.

For Shellie, the dreaded "B" word became her second chance. She was determined never to get into that embarrassing situation again. She was never going to be afraid to answer the phone or check the mailbox.



Shellie; addicted to credit.

### Crawling out of the debt pit

Shellie came up with a budget to support herself and her daughter. This meant living within her means on a cash-only system. She was now taking responsibility for her spending habits and financial situation. Her first step was to get the proper education in budget and finance. She read books, magazines, attended seminars and went back to school.

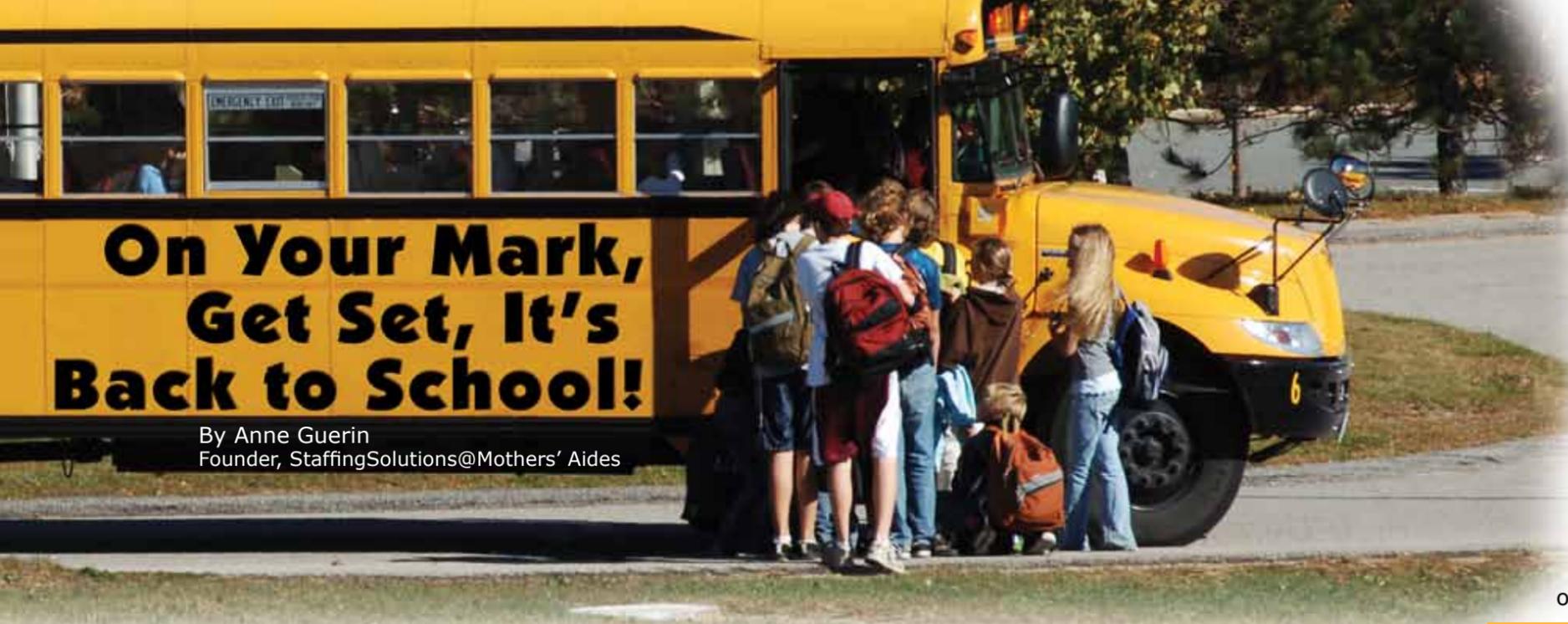
### Educating others

Today, Shellie is a certified Financial Educator through the National Endowment of Financial Education. Wanting to teach others what to avoid from her past mistakes, Shellie formed an organization called Parents Empowering Families and Communities ([www.pefacpg.com](http://www.pefacpg.com)), which equips adolescents with the necessary life skills and tools to have a successful transition into financial responsibility. She holds seminars once a month for parents as well as adolescents. She now has the experience and education to help others out of their debt pit.

### Leading by example

Still a single mom, Shellie is now leading her 16-year-old daughter by example. Today she has a plan to make sure her daughter makes good financial decisions, which she passes onto all parents.

Continued on page 43



# On Your Mark, Get Set, It's Back to School!

By Anne Guerin  
Founder, StaffingSolutions@Mothers' Aides

Those lazy days of summer have come to a screeching halt and we're into another school year. But that doesn't mean it has to be a frenzied roller coaster ride as you white-knuckle it until next summer. Some simple planning now can lay the groundwork for the smoothest school year yet.

## Set a Routine

To ensure a good start means starting with a plan. Determine what time your children need to be out the door in the morning and work backwards. No matter what you come up with, add 15 minutes. Someone will spill his milk or be unable to find her favorite hair bow!

Once you've determined a good wake-up time, work backwards again to decide what time your children need to go to bed. A good night's sleep is essential for both their health and education, and a bedtime routine goes a long way toward achieving these goals.

*Once the school year is established, instead of asking, "How was your day?" you might want to ask about the best five things that happened that day, who sat next to them at lunch or what they did at recess, gym or music.*

Be sure to build in time to talk as kids often have fears and misgivings about school. This practice will also pay big dividends as time goes on and they face bullies, hurt feelings and other social challenges. Your challenge, in many cases, will be to get them talking, so steer clear of vague questions. Once the school year is established, instead of asking, "How was your day?" you might want to ask about the best five things that happened that day, who sat next to them at lunch or what they did at recess, gym or music.

## Safety First

Are your children taking a bus or walking to school? Either way, it is essential to be sure they know the safety rules. This is a perfect time

to discuss the importance of taking only the path that you've approved, what to do if a stranger approaches them and what to do when something goes wrong. If your doctor's appointment runs late and you're not at the bus stop or at home, what do you want your children to do? Agencies can provide emergency caregivers in these cases, but you and your child should have a code word or phrase that guarantees that your child cannot be fooled. Instead of simply telling them how to act, propose several scenarios with them and ask them what they think they should do. Not only will this cause them to think about the situations, it will also make clear to you whether they understand the point you're trying to make.

## Home Alone

If your child is old enough to be left alone after school, even for a short time, she will feel more secure if you have established a strict routine: lock the door, call Mom or Dad, eat a snack, do chores, etc. Having a structured routine will ensure safety, as does reviewing what to do in case of fire or if someone comes to the door. Children need to know what their restrictions are. Can they watch TV? Use the stove? Have friends over or go outside to play?

## Hiring Help

You may need to hire a sitter either on a regular or occasional basis. An experienced caregiver can put your mind at ease as well as facilitate a smoother ride for the whole family. Mature caregivers can help children with homework,

provide snacks, start dinner and take the kids to their activities.

If a caregiver will be transporting your children, be sure to sign a transportation release and inform the school if someone other than you has permission to pick up the child. If the caregiver is using his or her own car, be sure there are appropriate car seats for the ages and sizes of your children.

## Backup Plans

No one expects emergencies, but they come anyway. Always be sure your children and caregivers have access to emergency numbers: 911, doctors, a neighbor or friend close by and of course, how to reach you. You may want to consider signing a medical release form that gives your caregiver permission to have your child treated in your absence.

If you don't use a caregiver on a routine basis, you still may want to form a relationship with an agency so you have access to a professional sitter when you're waiting for that delayed flight bringing your mother-in-law in from Wisconsin.

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# Your #1 Role: Keeping Your Child Safe

By Stacey Gappert, Maryland State Trooper

Single parenthood can be a personal choice or a role that is thrust upon us due to circumstances. As a single parent, I will never forget the day it finally hit me: "I am doing this alone." I am a Maryland State Trooper, assigned to the Centreville Barrack.

As I prepared for my new role as a single parent, I used to fear I would forget something, so I woke up an extra hour early to get ready for work. I shined my shoes, polished my brass and holstered my weapon. Last but not least, I grabbed my son, the diaper bag, and headed for daycare before heading to work.

**If your relationship with the other parent is tense, the best place to do a child exchange is in a public place.**

My son was a year old when my ex-husband and I separated. As the legal battle commenced, the tension level between us soared. Nonetheless, we exchanged our son in a civil and respectful manner. If your relationship with the other parent is tense, the best place to do a child exchange is in a public place. Exchanging your child in the parking lot of a State Police Barrack – or any other police agency parking lot – could eliminate anxiety for both parents and the child. The parking lots are well lit, and if things were to get out of control, a police officer would always be close by. Every State Police Barrack has a Trooper on duty 24/7.

The challenges and demands of juggling everyday life can seem overwhelming, especially now that you are a single parent. Nevertheless, adults must prioritize duties and multitask. Nothing is more important than preserving the safety, happiness and wellbeing of our children.

When your child is in your care, there is nothing more important than his or her safety. Here are more safety tips for all parents:

▶ **Check the Backseat.** Nothing is routine when you are a single parent. Some days you may have the kids, but some days you may not. Your schedule is constantly changing, which can leave room for a deadly error. The statistics of children being left in parked cars, strapped in their car seats are increasing. In 2008, the total number of hyperthermia deaths of children left in cars was 43.



So far, in 2009, a reported 21 child deaths have occurred ([www.ggweather.com](http://www.ggweather.com), Professor Jan Null of SFSU). When you park your car, especially at night, take a minute to turn around and look in your backseat. Your child may very well be sleeping, and your mind may be preoccupied. Get in the habit of taking off your seatbelt and turning around to look. It only takes a second, but may potentially save your child's life.

▶ **Safety Seats.** When I talk to first graders, I am surprised at the number of children who tell me they have not been in a safety seat for a couple of years. Maryland Law now requires children from the ages of 4 through 8 years old to be in an approved booster seat. Many children say they have never even been in a booster seat. Furthermore, several children told me that their parents allowed them to ride up front with just a seatbelt. PLEASE make sure your child is in the proper safety seat. They learn from us, so if we refuse to take this seriously, then we cannot expect them to. It only takes a second to buckle them up, and this precaution could potentially be the difference between life and death. Visit [www.mdkiss.org](http://www.mdkiss.org) to learn about Maryland's Safety Seat Laws. For free Safety Seat inspections, please contact your local State Police Barrack to schedule an appointment.

▶ **Stranger Danger.** Sit down with your young child or children and discuss the threats that come along with people they do not know. Give "what if" scenarios and see how they respond. Predators are well aware that children – when they're not in school – are out on bicycles, at playgrounds, and even home alone while their parents are working.

Reiterate to your children on a frequent basis that they are not to talk to someone they do not know, and they should never ever leave with a stranger. If you witness a child being abducted, do your best to get the suspect's vehicle information, especially a license plate number. We need that information to activate the AMBER Alert.

To learn more about AMBER Alert, visit [www.mdsp.org](http://www.mdsp.org) and click on "AMBER Alert."

▶ **Do your Homework.** I know what it is like to need a babysitter on short notice. Just be sure to do the research on your child care provider. Do not be afraid to ask questions. Ask neighbors, friends, other single parents, and be sure to get references. There are many free websites that now offer background information. Get the full name of the person that you are considering and enter his or her name into the Maryland Judiciary Case Search. Log onto [www.casesearch.courts.state.md.us](http://www.casesearch.courts.state.md.us) and get instant results. Another website to become familiar with is [www.dpscs.state.md.us/sorSearch/](http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/sorSearch/). This allows you to search for local convicted sex offenders that may be living in your neighborhood. Check it frequently.

▶ **Internet Predators.** Sexual predators come in all races, ages and backgrounds. In this day and age, predators are a click away on your child's computer. Monitor your child's Internet use, especially Facebook and Myspace, which keeps your child company. Many of the sites you think are safe are not. Make sure your child does not give out any personal information for others to see. Kids are naïve; at times, adults are too. Discuss the dangers with your children, especially your pre-teens and teenagers.

There is nothing we do during the day that is more important than exercising a few simple and quick techniques that could prevent tragedy. A child's life is a precious gift. I encourage all parents to educate themselves on child safety and exercise all of the preventative measures that just may save your child's life.



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# SAFETY AT HOME

By Jeff Weese  
President of Weese Homes, Inc.

Keeping your home safe for your family is a primary concern for every parent. There are many key elements of home safety including special safeguards for homes with small children or the elderly.

Here are some safeguards that are fundamental to every home:

▶ Keep medications, cleaning supplies, insecticides, weed killers and other potentially harmful products in properly marked containers and in locations where only adults will be able to reach them.

▶ Install smoke detectors in every bedroom and within 10 feet of the kitchen. Be sure there is at least one smoke detector on each floor of the home. Check smoke detectors monthly to ensure they are functioning properly and replace batteries every six months. Some use the changing of the clocks for daylight savings time as a reminder to change smoke detector batteries.



▶ Get a carbon monoxide detector for your home. Carbon monoxide detectors can be purchased for as little as \$30. Many models are battery operated and do not require professional installation. Considering the low cost, it is a wise investment to protect your family from the potentially deadly toxic gas.



▶ Ensure that Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets have been installed in your bathrooms, kitchen, garage and any outdoor outlets. GFCI outlets are required in the current electrical code for all areas of a home where water usage is probable. An



appliance that gets wet could provide a path for electricity to travel from the hot wire inside the appliance through to the user. GFCI outlets monitor the current that is flowing between the hot and neutral leads of an outlet and, in the event of an abnormality, will trip the circuit, preventing electric shock.

▶ If you live in an area susceptible to Radon gas, be sure to have a Radon detector installed. Radon is odorless and colorless and is undetectable to humans. It is a natural, radioactive gas known to cause cancer. A Radon-monitoring detector costs about \$120. There are also Radon test kits available but you should opt for an electronic detector which provides ongoing monitoring. Radon levels can change with humidity and other environmental factors.

▶ Be sure to keep paint in good repair. Cracking, chipping or peeling paint can be harmful to children and pets if handled or eaten. This is particularly true of homes built prior to 1978 where lead-based paint may have potentially been used in construction or remodeling of the home. If it is possible that your home contains lead-based paint, you should have a professional test the paint and the soils surrounding the home.

▶ Keep a fire extinguisher in an easily accessible location and make sure all family members know how to get to it and operate it effectively. Check the extinguisher monthly to ensure that it is maintaining its charge. Check the type of extinguisher you have and be sure it will handle common household fire types. An ABC-type extinguisher will handle fires of flammable liquids, electric short circuits, and wood and cloth fires.



▶ Unplug small appliances when not in use. Some heat resistor appliances (e.g., hair dryers, toasters and coffee pots) have been known to cause fires when their on/off switches fail.

▶ Clean your dryer vent and lint trap regularly. Lint traps should be cleaned after each load. Vents should be cleaned to ensure proper air flow. Pay special attention to the area where the dryer vent hose connects to the dryer. Also check to ensure that your dryer vent hose is made of a nonflammable material. If your dryer hose is made of a white vinyl material, replace it as soon as possible. Keeping your dryer vent clean and free of kinks will ensure proper air flow and reduce risk of fire.

▶ Check the hot water temperature setting on your hot water heater. Many safety experts recommend setting your water temperature at 120 degrees. The exact temperature setting is up to each individual and his or her own preference but make sure the temperature setting will not endanger children or guests. It takes only one second of exposure to water at 150 degrees to cause a burn.

Finally, use proper maintenance and keep things in good repair. When you need it, consult professional help. Maintaining your home will pay dividends in the long term for both economic and safety reasons.



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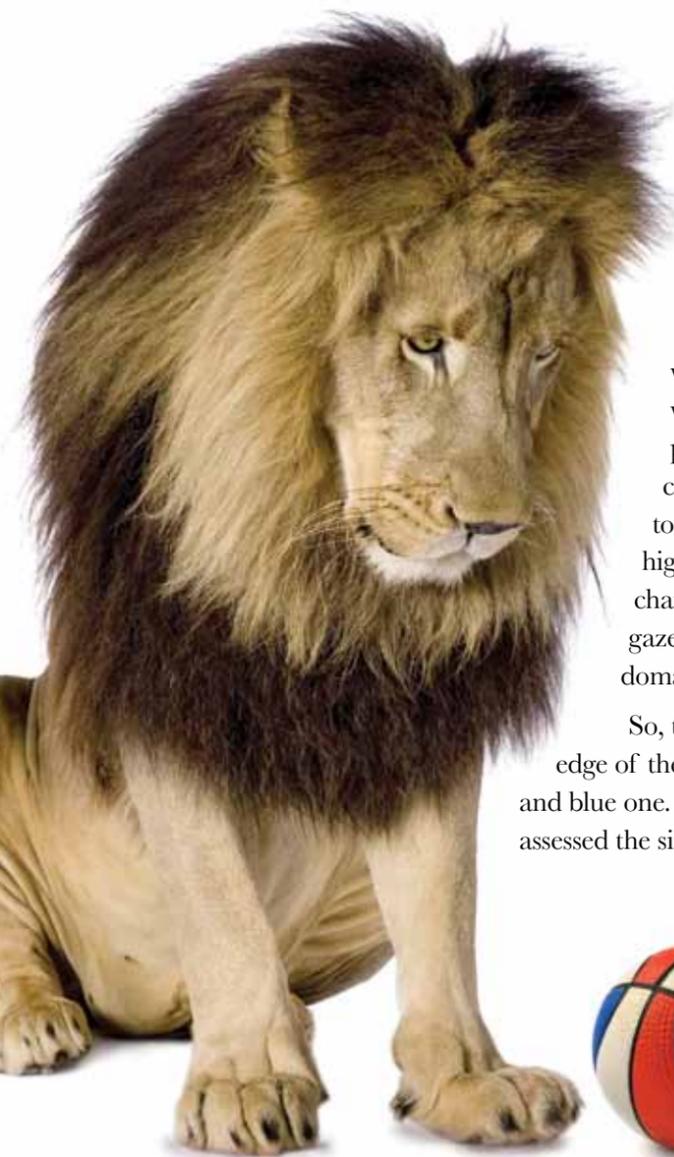
## SAFETY TIP:

# NEVER CLIMB A LION CAGE

By Mike Timm : Chef, Father, Survivor

As a father to two active sons, I find myself on a lookout for the sharp pointy objects of life that might cause them pain or anguish – poor decision making being the sharpest stick of all. Truly, we as parents can never completely protect our kids from every possible nick and cut to their body and soul, but if we can just keep them safe from the big stuff . . . We do our best.

Ask anyone for his or her opinion about what's best for our children. Doting mothers have a tendency to overthink the potential for danger and thereby overprotect, whereas fathers look to harden their sons by encouraging a fearless, can-do attitude. Both have their place, and in combination, strike a necessary balance. I know this by personal experience.



On a nice weekend, one of the easy, fun things for us to do as kids was to visit the Norfolk Zoo. We would pack a load of popcorn to snack on and to share with (throw at) the ducks and seagulls. We would boil some water, place a few hot dogs in a coffee thermos, add the water, clamp down the lid and have a hot dog picnic later with our peanut butter and jelly crackers and pickles (we loved pickles).

We would go several times a year, ending on the large (now deemed horribly unsafe) playground just outside the park. I remember the 10-foot-high slides, the equally high, hand polished monkey bars, the spinning wooden disks with 12 kids of varying ages clinging to the large metal handles as dads did their best to see how far a 50-pound child could be launched by use of centrifugal force (note: not a mother-sanctioned activity). It's a wonder we survived.

Anyway, shortly after "the split" we went with Dad to the zoo for the day. I think I was about 9 or 10. In those days, the use of chain link cages was the norm, allowing for gawking pedestrians to get an up close and personal look at our planet's wondrous wildlife.

The cage of interest for this story is the lion cage. The lions were housed in a moderately sized concrete, central domicile with access to two exterior cement patios. Side by side, the patios created separate cages for the male and females. The cages were peaked in the middle like two A-frame houses glued together, sharing a wall in the middle, which was about 8 feet high. Around the cages was a grass "moat" about 3 feet wide and chain link barrier fence not quite 4 feet high. From there, we would gaze at the king of beasts, resting on his perch, looking out on his domain, no doubt wondering, "Who the hell did I piss off?"

So, this day, stuck in a low spot, about 5 feet back from the front edge of the cage, was a very in-vogue ABA basketball, the old red, white and blue one. Seeing this, my father, one of the smartest men I know, quickly assessed the situation and said to me, "Mike, ya' know if I gave you a boost, you could probably get that ball."

At this point in the story, had my mother been there or any other mother not shocked into a state of disbelief, she would have done the quick math about a \$5 basketball and put a hasty stop to any further conversation about it. This is also where, as readers, fathers are saying, "Well, did you go

for it?" and mothers are saying, "Please tell me your father didn't let you do something that insane." Sorry moms.

The initial boost was no problem, the first few feet climbing across the low spot were also not a problem. First bit of dropped logic: a 9 year old climbing on an 8 foot high cage on all fours looks a lot like a monkey. Second bit: Lions have been known to eat monkeys. Third: When extremely focused on a goal, sometimes smart people do not fully think through the details. Overlooked detail one: Lions look a lot smaller laying down 20 feet away. When alert and standing just below you, they seem to get bigger. Two: A lion that is around 4 feet tall is nearly 8 feet long. Three: lions can and will jump. All these thoughts came to me a bit late, but might have occurred earlier to any mother, and even some fathers. My own father saw the light about 5 seconds after the lions took interest in the new and exciting addition to the roof of their cage.

As the now apparently very large male approached beneath me, I became extremely aware of his presence, to the point that my arms, legs and brain ceased to function. I locked up, only able to maintain the big cat's fixed gaze. I think he might have licked his chops. Through the fog, I heard my father's voice calling my name several times with an increasing sense of urgency in each calling, 'till I snapped out of it. This took about eight seconds.

I can only imagine the onlookers staring in horror (or maybe some morbid fascination) as the lions closed in. Another lost tidbit: In a pride of lions, females do the hunting. As I heard my father, I caught a bit of

movement to my left. My eyes moved over to see the bigger of the two females as she approached, smoothly coiled herself up and sprang with her forepaws and face into the cage where my face hovered just inches above.

So, let me tell ya', I've seen a lion eye to eye. As she hit the cage, I naturally recoiled to a slight standing position, spun, took two steps and jumped. My father was big enough, strong enough, and alarmed enough to catch me easily on the fly. A retreat from the scene of the crime was deemed prudent, amidst much murmuring and sighs, to a spot not inhabited by hunters of small children or zookeepers. After a recuperative moment, a hug or two and some deep breathing, my father said something that I will remember forever, and remains the single best punch line of any story I've told over the years. He said to me, in a calm reassuring voice,

with just a hint of suggestion, and a tweak of apologetic humbleness, "Mike ... um ... ya' know ... you probably shouldn't tell your mother about this." I wholeheartedly agreed.

The whole idea is this: As single parents, we need to be mindful of good balance. Yes, we want our kids to grow, learn, think for themselves and make good decisions that are not driven solely by pressure and impulses. If you know it's not really going to hurt them, sometimes letting them make a few decisions on their own is OK. Lessons learned the hard way have a way of sticking more securely in one's memory. But ... thinking out the details, saying to oneself "what if" on a regular basis, is good practice and should be taught to our kids, even if we don't always live by it ourselves. And ... if you see someone's kid about to climb a lion cage, or anything else similarly destructive, have the courage to say something

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# Taking Control Of Your Teenage Driver

*their life depends on it*

By Terry Ober  
Community Traffic Safety Program Coordinator

Driving is a full-time job. No time to text or have other distractions – right? If you are the parent of a new young driver, you have co-signed for his or her driving permit and have taken responsibility to assure that you have supervised 60 hours of driving. Did you know you can also take away your teen’s driving privilege at any time by contacting the Department of Motor Vehicles?

Your young driver is a “high risk” due to his or her age and inexperience. Driving should not be taken lightly. Be aware that, when there is no parental supervision, young drivers take unnecessary risks that lead to tragedies involving serious injury and even death. 11,000 young drivers between the ages of 15 and 24 die each year from motor vehicle crashes.

Although your teen has attended a commercial driving school, it is up to you to take the extra time and energy to ensure your teen is demonstrating proper safe-driving skills. Take every opportunity to educate your teen and strengthen his or her knowledge and understanding of how to be a safer driver. Their life depends on it.

While driving with your newly licensed permit driver, make sure seatbelts and other safety equipment are used all the time, every time.

Make sure your teenage driver is aware of the laws and rules of the road. Also, consider initiating rules of your own, especially when your car is involved. Here are some suggestions:

- Set restrictions of where the car can be driven.
- Know where the car will be used and why it is needed.
- Be strict about who may or may not accompany your teenage driver.
- Insist that seatbelts/safety equipment are used at ALL TIMES.
- Set curfews for the car as well as the teenager.
- Visually inspect the interior of the automobile after each use.
- Consider GPS systems or on-board cameras.
- Do not tolerate drugs and alcohol use.

***Is your teen becoming an aggressive driver? These driving habits should trigger a red flag:***

- Speeding
- Following too closely
- Failure to stop for red traffic light
- Failure to stop for a stop sign
- Improper passing (cutting in and out)
- Failure to yield right of way
- Unsafe passing on the right

***Teach your teen to calm down aggressive driving by:***

- allowing more travel time,
- coming to a full stop at stop signs and red lights,
- letting other drivers merge ahead of them,

- obeying speed limits,
- not following other drivers too closely,
- resisting the temptation to teach someone a “lesson,” and
- showing courtesy to other drivers.

***If you encounter an aggressive driver:***

- Get out of the way.
- Stay relaxed and concentrate on reaching your destination safely and calmly.
- Don’t challenge the aggressive driver. Ignore rude gestures.
- Not all aggressive driving behavior is intentional.
- Don’t block passing lanes, move (right) over into the slow lane.
- Call police; dial #77 to report aggressive drivers.

Teach your young driver to concentrate by avoiding distractions (cell phones, stereo and other passengers). Remember, they can’t control traffic, but they can control themselves.

Also, be aware that, as of Oct. 1, text messaging while driving in Maryland is against the law. If your teen is convicted of a misdemeanor of the new text messaging law, he or she will receive a fine of up to \$500.

Set an example for your teen by being a Smooth Operator yourself – avoid aggressive driving habits and be on the lookout for aggressive drivers. Safety should be the number one concern when getting behind the wheel.

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# Living In Peace:

## These parents go from a couple to friends

As told to **Single Parent 101**

After 10 years of marriage, one 6-year-old daughter and one trial separation, Andrew now lives the single-parent life as a full-time dad with part-time custody.

He's happier now, and he and his ex-wife, Leigh, have a better relationship. Their child, Hannah, still has her family although it's different than it used to be. But that's OK, they're still a family – they just don't live together anymore.

Is this different from the dad who sees his daughter every other weekend and a couple of weeks during the summer? Yes. Is it the right approach for all of us? You be the judge.

"We were lucky in that the marriage didn't end due to alcohol or drug abuse on either one's part nor was either one 'running around,'" said Andrew. "The marriage just wasn't meant to be. That made it easier to be careful and respectful of each other's roles to avoid confusing or poisoning Hannah."

***We understand that our life as a couple is over but that our life as friends is just starting. This is probably a different way of handling a divorce, but trying to keep things as normal as possible for Hannah is very important to me.***

Andrew says that the business of separating their household went relatively well because neither one really cared about something the other wanted. "Something that was my grandfather's stayed with me and gifts that my mother made as a fabric artist and gave to Leigh stayed with Leigh," he said.

When you don't get along, separation is sometimes easier and it might also help you become more civil with each other. When living in an uncomfortable environment, little things can seem more important and can get under your skin. "Separated, it becomes easier to swallow your pride and avoid the temptation to spar and provoke an argument. It only hurts Hannah eventually," said Andrew, who feels it is still important to give her "family" time, especially during the holidays.

"This past Christmas, we spent it together, the three of us. Is that what separated people do? Probably not, but why should Hannah be rewarded with two Christmases?" A family hug requested by Hannah was awkward and maybe a little weird but Andrew and Leigh buried the hatchet as they worked on being friends.

When a couple divorces, friends typically expect the single parents to redefine their social relationships into two units, excluding the ex-spouse. In Andrew and Leigh's case, friends find it confusing that this family is just as comfortable as a family threesome going on an outing as they are socially connecting with their own friends. And they make a point of separating the two. Hannah is very happy to have both of her parents together for her dance recital but most of the other parents don't know how to deal with it.

"There has to be a difference between family time and my social time," said Andrew. "Family time includes a level of interaction that a new friend of mine finds difficult to understand. Whether it's the family threesome going to the County Fair and my new friend is excluded or it's inviting your ex to join you for dinner with your daughter, these are going to cause problems. However, the opposite is that my social time is just that, mine."

Andrew feels strongly about making sure his and Leigh's relationship to Hannah stays intact, no matter who else comes into his life.

"A new friend will come over and Hannah may be there and they will get along tremendously. However, in no way is she a replacement for Hannah's mother.

Hannah is 6 years old. When she is 18, does her mother stop being her mother? She will always have the same mother and will always be in her life," said Andrew. "Anyone that I find for a relationship is thus for me. And, she has to understand that Hannah's mother will always be around with as good a relationship as we can have."

Everyone's circumstances are different, but Andrew feels he has to do what he thinks is right for his daughter and get over any problems that get in the way. "While there isn't a book out there with the definitive answer on the right way to handle these situations, I now have **Single Parent 101 Magazine**," said Andrew.

Andrew cautions that this friendly understanding doesn't happen overnight. "One of us can say that we have to learn how to be friends while the other responds, 'I don't want to be your friend, you ripped my heart out.' That time in our relationship when one of us needed to vent or scream or just generally get pissed off is over," said Andrew.

Andrew feels they communicate better now, both the positives and the negatives. "Many of the little things that used to cause problems don't exist anymore. I thought I was such a great guy when I replaced the toilet paper, but I couldn't seem to get it 'right.' Now that it doesn't

matter, I notice that I'm always having the toilet paper come off the top of the roll. Maybe I'm being obnoxious," said Andrew.

"We understand that our life as a couple is over but that our life as friends is just starting. This is probably a different way of handling a divorce, but trying to keep things as normal as possible for Hannah is very important to me."



photos: Laura Olson

# PEDAL POWER

## CYCLE YOUR WAY TO A NEW ADVENTURE WITH YOUR KIDS

By Linda Blachly, Managing Editor

*Enjoy some quality time with your child bicycling together. While pedaling, you get to explore new areas and have an adventure while taking in the beauty of the changing seasons. For single parents struggling to find economical ways to spend afternoon or weekends with your kids, your money certainly will go the extra mile on a biking trip.*



This area has some great bike trails, no matter if you just want to take a leisurely ride with some cool scenery for a few hours or if you want to use your bicycle to get you from one place to another.

No matter which level you choose, make sure to prepare properly. The goal is to make memories for your kids, so be sure they're good ones. Lack of preparation can certainly spoil your fun adventure.

Before taking off, prepare for a fun, safe ride. Here are some great suggestions, courtesy of eHow.com:

1. Pick a location that's appropriate for your youngest or least experienced kids. If someone in your family is still gaining confidence on a bike, heading to a quiet park may be a better choice than a busy boardwalk.
2. Have an alternative option for younger kids. Your goal on these rides is for everyone to come home excited for the next bike ride. If your youngsters are pushed too hard, they won't have fun. Consider a bike trailer or a trail-a-bike for kids that need extra help.
3. Not all kids will be excited about riding bikes for the sake of riding bikes. Keep things interesting. Destination rides are great. Pack a picnic in your bike basket and ride to your favorite picnic spot.
4. Don't forget to stop and smell the roses. Kids love to learn. Pick a spot to ride bikes where you can stop and explore. You don't have to live by a national park to find something fun. Investigating a gopher hole may well do the trick.
5. Play games as you ride. If your kids play, it's harder for them to get bored or focus on being tired. Race them to the next crack on the path. Play a game of red light, green light.
6. Offer lots of encouragement. They may not be ready for the Tour de France but making a loop around the park should feel like a podium finish.

### Top 10 area bike trails, recommended by James Menzies of BikeWashington.org:

#### **Baltimore & Annapolis Trail:** 13 Mile - Paved

Recommended ride for beginners.

The Baltimore and Annapolis Trail (B&A) is a nice trail for the whole family. The trail has about an 8-foot wide paved surface and is in good condition. The total length is 13 miles between Annapolis and Glen Burnie.

Once you reach the northern terminus, a short connector path will take you over to the recently completed BWI Trail. The southern half of the trail cuts through some nice suburban neighborhoods. As you head farther north, the terrain becomes much more urban. The path goes right past Marley Station Mall before taking you into downtown Glen Burnie and then you can continue another 11 miles onto the BWI Trail network. Food is plentiful along the way, with stops available in Severna Park and Pasadena.

#### **BWI Trail:** 11 Miles - Paved

Loop trail around Baltimore-Washington International Airport.

Designed primarily with commuters in mind, the 11-mile BWI trail is also an excellent recreation facility.

Many trail sections are surprising peaceful, despite the close proximity to airport runways. The ride through Friendship Park's young pine forest is very pleasant. Andover Park, at the north side of the airport, provides a great overlook of the general aviation runway.

Make sure you bring along enough food and drink, since there are no stores along the path. However, vending machines are available at the Amtrak Station. Rest rooms are available at Andover Park and the Amtrak Station.

**Capital Crescent Trail:** 13 Miles - Paved/Crushed Stone

The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) is a rail trail project running through the Northwest D.C. Area. The paved section runs from Georgetown to Downtown Bethesda. The remaining section has a crushed limestone surface.



On weekends, it is a very popular spot for local cyclists and rollerbladers. During weekdays, bike commuters use the CCT to travel between Washington, D.C., and the Northwest suburbs.

The southern seven miles between Georgetown and Bethesda has a 9-foot wide asphalt surface and is in excellent condition. The northern Georgetown Branch extension provides a crushed gravel surface for the final four miles between Bethesda and Silver Spring. The two trails are connected by a brand new tunnel located under downtown Bethesda.

**Chesapeake & Ohio Towpath:** 184 Miles—Natural Surface

The 184.5 mile long Chesapeake & Ohio Canal is located along the north bank of the Potomac River, starting in Washington, D.C., and ending in Cumberland. The canal was built between 1828 and 1850, and it operated sporadically until

1924. Today, much of the canal has been drained of water and reclaimed by the forest. However, the canal's towpath remains a favorite of hikers, joggers and bicyclists.

The towpath is not paved (the surface is typically clay and crushed stone), so it is a bit rough. The first 20 miles is the most heavily used and is a good place to practice.

**Cross Island Trail:** 5 Miles - Paved

New trail running across Kent Island. Nice stop for when heading to the beach. Recommended ride for beginners.

In Sept. 2001, Queen Anne's County opened this nice little trail running across Kent Island. The Cross Island Trail starts in the Terrapin Nature Area (located directly across the bay from Sandy Point Beach) and runs all the way to Kent Narrows. This wide, paved trail offers views of the Chester River and the surrounding woodlands of Kent Island. The county has also constructed a couple of wooden bridges along the trail that offer great views of the local waterways.

This would make a nice family day trip. If your family makes the annual "beach pilgrimage," then this trail



would also provide a great diversion to break up the long ride. In addition to bicycling, there are also over two miles of hiking trails in the Terrapin Nature Area, located at the western end of the bike trail. After your ride, you can enjoy one of the many restaurants located near the path.



**Mount Vernon Trail:** 18 Miles - Paved

Very scenic trail that runs along the Potomac River to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate.

The Mount Vernon Trail is a big favorite of area cyclists. Nearly 18 miles long, the trail offers wonderful views of the Potomac and Washington, D.C. monuments. Great sites along the way include George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, Olde Town Alexandria, Arlington National Cemetery and Gravelly Point (at the north end of National Airport's main runway).

For the most part, the trail is fairly flat with an occasional rolling hill here and there. However, the last mile heading toward Mount Vernon has a pretty good climb.

The trail surface is paved. Since this is one of the oldest trails in the area, it is not up to current design standards. In some spots, the trail is narrow and winding. However, a number a recent improvements have



been completed including resurfacing and widening. Additionally, two new overpasses have been installed over National Airport's access ramps. Some of the bridge crossings are very narrow, so you may want to dismount your bike when encountering these tight spots. On nice weekends, expect a high traffic volume.

**North Bethesda Trail:** 4 Miles - Paved (On Road Sections)

This trail provides an excellent commuter connection between Rockville and Bethesda.

North Bethesda Trail runs between Bethesda and Rockville. Previously known as the Bethesda Trolley Trail, this project has upgraded and connected several existing trails into a very nice four mile long commuter route and greatly improves access to the popular Capital Crescent Trail (CCT).

The major features of this trail are two overpasses that span Interstates 270 and 495 (the Capital Beltway). Some sections remain on-street. The trail ends about a half-mile prior to the planned White Flint Metro terminus.

**Rock Creek Hiker/Biker Trail:** about 20 Miles - Paved (On Road Sections)

This trail is a loose collection of paths that were eventually

linked together. It is not too bad in Maryland, but the D.C. section does leave something to be desired. The D.C. on-road section is closed to traffic on weekends.

Maryland's 14-mile-long Rock Creek Trail is a collection of paved multi-use paths through southern Montgomery County. Although this area is mostly urbanized, the trail follows a mainly wooded route along the Rock Creek stream valley. As a result, the trail provides a nice traffic-



free route between Rockville and the Bethesda/Silver Spring business districts.

The northern trail head is located in Lake Needwood Regional Park, just a few miles east of downtown Rockville. The trail ends at the Washington, D.C. border, where Beach Drive enters the District.

**Sligo Creek and Branch Trails:** about 20 Miles - Paved

Maryland's Anacostia Tributary Trails start near Mt. Rainier, and provides connections to Wheaton Regional Park, the University of Maryland at College Park and Greenbelt Park.

Located just outside D.C.'s northeast border, this group of paved trails winds along the small stream

## 12 TIPS FOR SAFE BICYCLING

**1. Wear a helmet with a hard shell.**

**2. Ride a proper size bike. It should have a bell or horn, reflectors and a headlight for night riding.**

**3. Obey all signs and signals. If you can't read, don't ride on public roads.**

**4. Don't carry passengers on your bike.**

**5. Drive with the traffic and in single file.**

**6. Signal other roadway users.**

**7. Be bright at night. Wear bright clothes and make sure you have lights and reflectors on your bike.**

**8. Watch out for storm drains.**

**9. Be careful on wet pavement, wet leaves and loose gravel.**

**10. Watch out for cars leaving driveways.**

**11. Watch out for dogs and other animals.**

**12. Watch out for parked cars opening their doors.**

- By Maryland State Highway Administration, Bicycle Affairs Coordinator

**1-800-252-8776,  
www.bikes@sha.state.md.us**

# RULES OF THE ROAD

**Expect the unexpected.**

**Know what your bike can do and cannot do.**

**Inspect your bike. Don't let a breakdown spoil your day.**

**Drive on the right with the flow of traffic. Never go against traffic.**

**Pedal in single file. It's the best way to go.**

**Don't weave in and out of traffic or between parked cars.**

**Always ride in a straight line.**

**Stop and look in all directions before entering a street from driveways, a curb or another street.**

**Maintain control of your bike when traveling downhill. Take it easy.**

**Pull completely off the road when you stop to rest or talk.**

- By Maryland State Highway Administration, Bicycle Affairs Coordinator

**1-800-252-8776,  
www.bikes@sha.state.md.us**

valleys that feed the Anacostia River. Although the trails are a bit too narrow and windy for effective commuting, they do provide some nice recreational rides.

**Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Trail:** 22 Miles, when complete - Paved

The Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis Trail (WB&A) is constructed on the old WB&A Railroad alignment, which operated between 1887 and 1935, made up of three rail segments. The WB&A Trail begins at the corner of routes 450 and 704 near Lanham, and follows the original Main Line rail alignment. It runs northeast through Prince George's County past Bowie, to the Patuxent River. Prince George's County has six completed miles; Anne Arundel County has completed about three miles between Odenton and the Piney Orchard community. Despite the surrounding suburban development, there is actually quite a bit of wildlife to see along the trail.



## Six new bike trails open in Talbot County

In addition, Talbot County recently launched six themed bicycle trails designed for cyclists sporting beginner to expert skills. The mapped trails feature 180

miles of beautiful Talbot County sights including spectacular views of farmland, scenic landscapes and waterscapes, historical sites, and big sky vistas. The routes are part of an ongoing initiative by the Office of Tourism to bring health and wellness activities to Talbot County for visitors and residents alike. For a map, visit, [http://www.tourtalbot.org/PDFs/talbot\\_county\\_bicycle\\_map.pdf](http://www.tourtalbot.org/PDFs/talbot_county_bicycle_map.pdf).



photo: Jessica Bauer

## MORE BIKE TRAILS RESOURCES

Visit [www.BikeWashington.org](http://www.BikeWashington.org) for some great recommendations.

Visit [www.trails.com](http://www.trails.com), where you can download maps and trail guides, for a fee.

You can also get Maryland bicycle routes and trail maps at [www.dnr.state.md.us/outdoors/biking.html](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/outdoors/biking.html).

The Maryland Office of Tourism also offers useful information at <http://visitmaryland.org/pages/hikingbiking.aspx>.

State Highway Administration publishes a very nice bike map for the entire state, and the Scenic Byways Map/guide also has some on-road itineraries suitable for long-haul biking: Visit <http://www.sha.state.md.us/SHAServices/mapsBrochures/maps/oppe/maps.asp>

For more information on Maryland Rails to Trails, visit <http://www.trailink.com>

## An Inspiring Mom - Continued.

1. Keep the lines of communication open by discussing important decisions and expectations. This, she feels, will help her daughter prepare for her future by making well-thought-out choices.

2. Instill responsible spending. She gives her daughter an allowance (paycheck) every other week and will not give her extra money to tide her over to the next payday. This has taught her daughter how to budget her money and save. Shellie tells her, "You can't go to your boss and ask for an advance on your paycheck."

3. Budget and save up for what you want. Shellie will help her daughter with money and a budget for special occasions such as prom, clothes, special trips or activities. If her daughter wants more than what Shellie budgets, her daughter has to save and make up the difference. This has taught her daughter to prioritize what she really wants.

## Forgive yourself

Shellie stresses the importance of forgiveness. She had to learn to forgive herself for not making the right choices financially and personally in the past. She also had to forgive others. "Unforgiveness keeps you in the



Shellie; free from credit card debt.

past and hinders you from going forward," said Shellie.

Shellie is the first person to admit that she made poor choices in her youth that affected herself and her child. She doesn't play the blame game and make excuses. What Shellie learned from her mistakes and how she uses that knowledge and experience to help others is truly inspiring!

# Get Inspired!

SINGLE PARENT 101 MAGAZINE  
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TELL US YOUR INSPIRING STORY OR THE STORY OF SOMEONE YOU KNOW.

WHAT WERE THE CHALLENGES AND HOW WERE THEY OVERCOME?  
THE STORIES OF TWO SINGLE PARENTS WILL BE FEATURED IN EACH  
ISSUE AS AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO OTHERS. YOU ARE NOT ALONE!

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OR MAIL TO P.O. Box 307, CHESTER, MD 21619.  
DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, EMAIL AND PHONE NUMBER.

# FALL INTO AUTUMN FUN WITH GHOST TOURS AND FESTIVALS

## Mount Vernon Ghost Tour

Mount Vernon, Baltimore's cultural center, may be more "spirited" than you think. Admire the architecture while tour guides regale you with the history and haunted lore of this striking neighborhood that was home to many of Baltimore's leading citizens. Hear about the ghosts who have never checked out of the Belvedere, a séance gone wrong, and more than one grand dame who still oversees the activities of her home. This is an exciting tour that pulls back the curtain and peers into the other side.

**Location:** Mount Vernon, Baltimore City

**Dates & Times:** Friday-Saturday, 7 p.m. (through November).

**Phone:** 410-522-7400

**Website:** baltimoreghosttours.com

## Candlelight Ghost Tours of Frederick

Eyewitness encounters and recorded events are the basis for evening candlelight walking tours highlighting paranormal activity in the historic district of downtown Frederick.

Tour guides, dressed in period attire from Frederick's past, lead visitors through the city's dark streets and alleyways. The flickering candles add to the ambience of an informative, yet spookily fun and adventurous, investigation of haunted sites in search of the infamous, the unknown and the unexplained.

**Dates & Times:** Tours are 90 minutes, Friday and Saturday nights, Oct. 16-Nov. 7, at 7:30 p.m. There is no tour Oct. 31st.

**Cost:** \$8 for adults, \$4 for children ages 6-12

**Phone:** 301-668-8922

**Website:** www.marylandghosttours.com

## The Original Fells Point Ghost Walk

Picture Fell's Point, in Baltimore, as it was; a rowdy seaport town, the birthplace of the sleek and dangerous clipper ship. Its streets full of sailors from foreign lands spilling off ships, immigrants anxious to start a new life, ladies of the night looking to make ends meet, and all the characters looking to make a living off the maritime industry. Given this explosive combination, is it any wonder that many spirits remained behind? Explore the many haunted pubs, shops and residences.

**Location:** Departs from the sidewalk outside of Max's sidebar (next door to Max's) on Broadway, at 731 S. Broadway near the Fell's Point Square in Baltimore.

**Cost:** Advance: \$13/ adults, \$8/children 12 and under. Onsite ticket prices (sold from 6-7 p.m. before the tour) \$15/adults \$10 children 12 and under.

**Dates & Times:** Saturdays: March-Nov., 7 p.m.; Fridays & Saturdays: July 1-Nov., 7 p.m.

**Website:** baltimoreghosttours.com



## "Ye Haunted History of Olde Ellicott City" Ghost Tour

Howard County Tourism has just added a Part II to its popular Ghost Tour. Retailers, restaurateurs and residents have all volunteered their NEW recent eyewitness accounts of paranormal activity for the Part II Ghost Tour.

**Location:** Purchase Tickets at the Howard County Visitor Information Center, 8267

Main Street in the historic district. Arrive 15 minutes early; tours leave promptly. Reservations are strongly recommended.

**Dates & Times:** April-November, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 p.m.

**Cost:** \$10 Adults, \$8 Children 12 & under, Seniors (65+) and active military personnel and their families. Not recommended for children under 6 years old.

**Phone:** 800-288-8747

**Website:** www.visithowardcounty.com

## Ghost Walks in Historic Savage Mill

At Historic Savage Mill, the ever-present spirits from the mill's heyday in the 19th century are lurking in the background shoppers find antiques, artist studios, and home furnishing stores.

The four Williams brothers borrowed \$20,000 from John Savage in 1820 to create a textiles weaving mill that wove canvas for clipper ships, Civil War tents and silent movie screens before World War II signaled the demise of the demand for woven cotton. Today, Savage Mill is a lovely hub of restaurants, bakeries, clothes stores, high quality antiques ...and ghosts! Reservations recommended.

**Location:** Tickets are purchased and tours begin in the food court of Historic Savage Mill.

**Dates & Times:** October - November, Limited Friday and Saturday Evenings at 8 p.m.

**Cost:** \$10 adults, \$8 children (12 & under) & seniors (65+) and active military personnel and their families. Not recommended for children under 6 years old.

**Phone:** 1-800-288-TRIP (8747) or e-mail: ghosts@visithowardcounty.com

**This fall there are lots of family-friendly activities you and your child can enjoy together to make memories while you have lots of fun!**

trips  
getaways.com

## The Original Annapolis Ghost Tour

The original Annapolis Ghost Tour is your source for not-of-this-world evening entertainment. From the 90-minute Walking Ghost Tour (family friendly), to the two-hour Haunted Pub Crawl (21+ only), there is no better way to discover the spirit, or shall we say Spirits of Annapolis. This is an entertaining way to learn a little about the history of Annapolis and a lot about some of its most ghastly residents.

**Phone:** 800-979-3370

**Website:** [www.annapolisghosts.com](http://www.annapolisghosts.com)

## Annapolis Haunted Ghost Tour

As the sun sets and darkness wraps the streets of historic, and some say, haunted Annapolis, a colonial-attired guide will lead you on a journey sharing tales by candlelight of the spirits who dwell in the town's 18th century buildings and may linger in the mist.

**Location:** Tour departs from the Museum Store, 77 Main St.

**Dates & Times:** The enhanced version of this tour is given Friday and Saturday nights, Sept. 4–Oct. 31. 7–9 p.m.

**Cost:** \$20/adult, \$14/child ages 3–11.

**Website:** [www.watermarkcruises.com](http://www.watermarkcruises.com)

## Ghost Tours of St. Michaels

A costumed guide will take you on a lantern-led stroll through the historic streets of St. Michaels and discover the tales and legends of ghosts, ghouls, and odd occurrences in this otherwise quiet Victorian town.

The tour takes about 1–1/2 hours, and the walk is less than one mile. Tours operate by reservation only and are available nightly.

**Location:** Tour leaves from the Mill Street information booth.

**Website:** [www.docksidexpress.com](http://www.docksidexpress.com)



# OTHER FALL EVENTS



## 20th Annual Sea Witch Halloween & Fiddlers Festival

**October 23–25**

If you're looking for an inexpensive and fun way to spend the Oct. 23–25 weekend, head to the Sea Witch Halloween and Fiddlers Festival at Rehoboth Beach in Delaware. In its 20th year, the festival includes costume parades (one for you and one for your pet) with bands and floats, contests, live music and riders on horseback. It culminates in the Sea Witch Hunt for those with the skills and stamina to follow the 100 clues. The festival theme for this year is "Got Straw? Stuff It At Sea Witch."



### Highlights include: Costume Parade

The monsters wag their way down the Boardwalk. Begins at 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 24 (weather dependent).

### The Sea Witch Halloween & Fiddler's Festival

From 1–5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24, at the Rehoboth Beach Convention Hall.

### Wacky Broom Tossing Contest

3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24. All age-based categories get a chance to toss their numbered broom on the beach, with the longest distance winning. Participants can't wait to walk away with a ribbon.

### Best Costumed Pet Parade

Sunday, Oct. 25. The line up begins at noon at Grenoble Place (on the actual street next to Stuart Kingston at the north end of the Boardwalk), judging will begin at 12:15 p.m., and promptly at 1 p.m. the monsters wag their way down the Boardwalk. Pets and owners parade down the Boardwalk letting the crowds get an eyeful. Judge's favorites are called

onto the Bandstand where prizes are awarded.

### Saltwater Cowboys Hit the Beach

Horse Show on the Beach

The horse parade is performed, just off the Boardwalk, at 5 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 24 and 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 25.

Sit back and watch the Maryland

Rough Riders as they provide musically choreographed horse performances and drills on the beach!

photo: PortraitsInTheSand.com



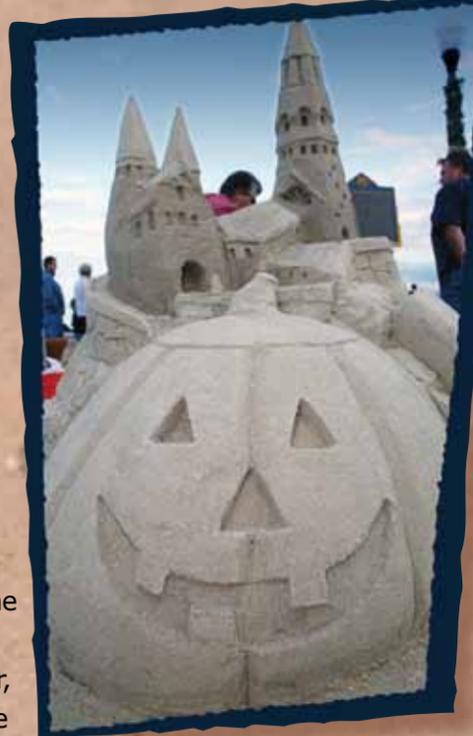
### Sea Witch Hunt

Those who believe they have both the hunting skill and stamina must first check in with the official clue keeper and pick up a 100-clue site location list. The clues run in no particular order, so hunters take their best guess prior to a final cut-off time. The earliest correct guess wins a cash prize.

The hunt begins at 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 24. All guesses must be handed in by 5 p.m. The winner is announced at the Bandstand on Saturday evening at 5 p.m.

Other events include live entertainment, a 5K race and the Webfooters Walk, Old-fashioned beach games for the kids, crafts, scarecrow making, face painting and trick-or-treating with merchants.

For more information, contact the Rehoboth Beach–Dewey Beach Chamber of Commerce at 800-441-1329, Ext. 0 or 302-227-2233, Ext. 0. Visit [www.beach-fun.com](http://www.beach-fun.com) for program information.



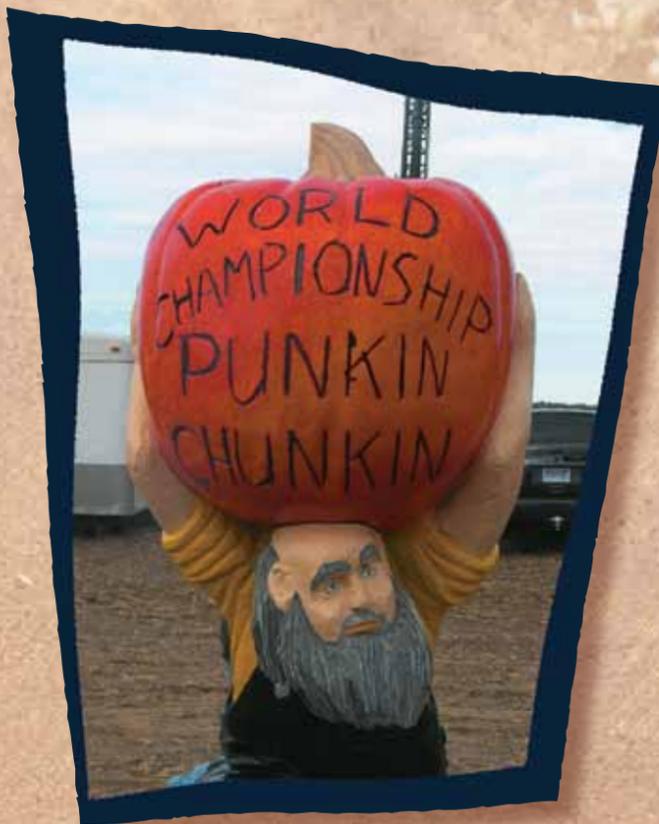
## Punkin Chunkin Festival

November 6, 7, 8

If you are looking for excitement and lots of fun for the whole family, look no further than the Punkin Chunkin Festival in Bridgeville, Del., Nov. 6-8. Held on a 1,000-acre cornfield, the festival offers spectators the chance to witness the possible record-breaking punkin chunk and enjoy a chili cook-off and a pumpkin-based goods cooking contest; 150 vendors offering food, crafts and other items; music by a variety of bands; and small carnival rides and contests. From the time you arrive to the time you leave, you will be entertained and fed, find lots of reasons to laugh and smile, have more fun than you can imagine and you will be glad you are there. And, don't be surprised if a free tee shirt or hat comes your way during the day, courtesy of the various sponsors of the event. Also, you just may find yourself standing next to Miss Delaware or another celebrity there to enjoy the fun. Keep your eyes open so you don't miss out on anything.

### Entertainment for kids

If the kids get tired of watching pumpkins flying, they can ride carnival rides, such as the merry-go-round and spinning swings, and try their hand at the ball toss game or the pumpkin toss. There will be inflatable slides, a trampoline and, for the older kids, a mechanical bull.



### What to bring

Wear comfortable clothes and shoes; it is in a cornfield after all. Bring extra clothes in case the temperature turns warmer or colder than expected. The event will be held no matter what the weather - sun, rain, or snow. A chair or blanket to sit on would be wise. You can bring your own food and drinks or purchase them from the vendors. No alcoholic beverages will be sold by the vendors.

Finally, bring a trash bag and plan to leave it in the trash receptacle at the end of the day.

Visit [www.punkinchunkin.com](http://www.punkinchunkin.com) for a schedule, admission prices (cash only), events and directions.

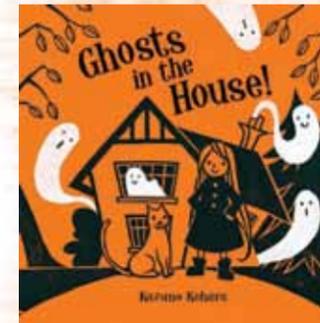
**For more information on Mid-Atlantic events and getaways, visit [www.tripsandgetaways.com](http://www.tripsandgetaways.com)**



# GREAT PICTURE BOOKS FOR THE AUTUMN

by Timothy Young

As an author/illustrator myself, I often look for books that jump off the shelf at me. They say you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but I always do, and hope to not be disappointed when I read them. Here are four recent books that are just as good on the inside as they are on the outside



### *Ghosts In The House!*

by **Kazuno Kohara** (Author, Illustrator)

This book came out last fall, and follows a young witch's ways of dealing with the ghosts in her house. She comes up with very clever uses for the many, many ghosts. The illustrations are sweet, in black and orange wood-cut style, with the white translucent ghosts popping off the page.

Reading level: Ages 4-8

Hardcover: 32 pages - Publisher: Roaring Brook Press  
ISBN-10: 1596434279 ISBN-13: 978-1596434271

### *The Little Bit Scary People*

by **Emily Jenkins** (Author), **Alexandra Boiger** (Illustrator)

This is a great book for teaching children that the people who might be "a little bit scary" to them, can be wonderful, happy, loving people too. All kinds of people, from scary skate-boarders to the school lunch-lady, are shown also doing other things in their lives. The illustrations work well to show the many sides of the people you meet, even when they are "a little bit scary."

Reading level: Ages 4-8

Hardcover: 32 pages - Publisher: Hyperion Book CH  
ISBN-10: 1423100751 ISBN-13: 978-1423100751



### *Willoughby & The Lion*

by **Greg Foley** (Author, Illustrator)

This book is visually stunning; I loved the use of black and white drawings, colored only with gold ink. The story concerns Willoughby Smith, who hates his new house. He thinks it's too small, too far away and the yard is too empty. A magnificent golden lion appears on a rock in his yard and offers up 10 wishes. Unless Willoughby wishes for something truly wonderful, the lion will be stuck on the rock forever. Enjoy how Willoughby tries to think of the best wish - and the wish he eventually realizes is the most wonderful.

Reading level: Ages 4-8

Hardcover: 40 pages - Publisher: HarperCollins  
ISBN-10: 0061547506 ISBN-13: 978-0061547508

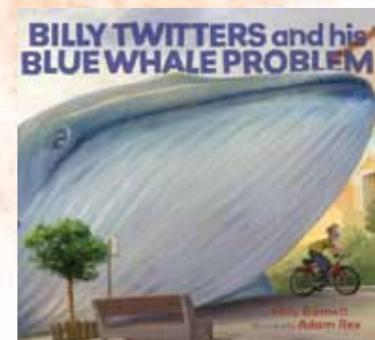
### *Billy Twitters and His Blue Whale Problem*

by **Mac Barnett** (Author), **Adam Rex** (Illustrator)

Billy Twitters is quite surprised when his parents make good on their threat to buy him a blue whale. He neglects to clean his room, and the next thing he knows a blue whale is delivered to his home, and Billy has to learn responsibility by feeding and caring for his whale at home and in school. Although he learns his lesson, he also comes up with a novel solution in the end. The illustrations in this book are great, highly detailed and populated by great characters. I especially loved the name on the delivery truck.

Reading level: Ages 4-8

Hardcover: 48 pages - Publisher: Hyperion Book CH  
ISBN-10: 0786849584 ISBN-13: 978-0786849584



# In Style:

## New Look for a New School Year

By Scott Brainard, Designer and Colorist

When the school doors swing open, your child can step through in style with a new haircut that exudes confidence and sets the stage for a successful school year.

Because school is an essential environment for students to explore and express who they are personally, intellectually and socially, single parents must do what they can to make their school experience as positive and rewarding as possible, while providing sensible boundaries within which our kids make choices about their looks.



But what's the right look?

The right back-to-school hairstyle essentially comes down to a trade-off of form and function—the more elaborate the look, the more time it takes to achieve it.

The right hairstyle should be appropriate for all a student's daily activities, from recess and gym class to after-school sports, science classes, work and more.

To select the right hairstyle, visit a salon with your child and discuss options with the stylist. Bring pictures of styles you both like so the hairstylist can get some idea of what kind of cut you like and then adapt it to your child's own face shape and hair texture.

If you want a fresh look without too much change, start with a small variation of his or her current style, such as adding bangs or changing the part. If the style change is drastic, it should be done during a holiday break so your child can have time to get used to it, or make changes if it doesn't work out.

Haircut maintenance depends on the style. For longer styles, the hair should be cut every six to eight weeks. For shorter and precision cuts, a trip to the salon will be necessary every four to six weeks to maintain its shape. If the style involves a new hair color, it will need to be refreshed every four to six weeks.

### Young kids: Stylish and Low-Maintenance Cuts

If you have young kids, you are probably looking for a cut that is both stylish and low-maintenance, so they can make a good impression without taking a lot of time getting ready in the morning.

Shorter cuts, both with and without bangs, are appropriate for both boys and girls because they are so active and rarely want to stand still to have their hair brushed or combed. Boys can also wear very short razor-cut hair, while girls may find it easier to grow their hair to medium length or longer and then tie hair back into a ponytail, pigtails or braids. Girls who don't want their hair put up may prefer head bands or other simple accessories that are easy for small hands to manage.



*The right back-to-school style should be appropriate for all a student's daily activities, from recess and gym class to after-school sports, science classes, work and more.*

### Tweens & Teens: Trendier Styles

Tweens and teenagers may prefer trendier hairstyles that involve elaborate, precision haircuts or use of hair color, including Emo and alternative scene styles.

The fun, carefree styles that were perfect in elementary school are too young for junior high, but the more elaborate, intensive looks of high school are just a shade too difficult. Popular short hairstyles for girls include bobs and pixie cuts, while boys may prefer buzz cuts or fades.

Medium-length hairstyles for girls include shags and face-framing layers, while boys can wear styles with longer hair on top and shorter hair on the sides and in back. All of these styles look even better when messy, making it highly appropriate for active kids.

If your teenager is particularly stylish, asymmetrical bobs that are accented with highlights are popular for both sexes. Maintaining a more sophisticated style, whether a bob or a shag, requires getting up earlier and investing the time to style properly before school.



### High Schoolers: Versatile Cuts to Match Their Lifestyle

High school students tend to exhibit the widest range of hairstyles based on what they will be doing each day. Students with gym classes or after-school sports



will need styles that are quick and easy to manage or that can easily be converted into no-nonsense looks for athletic participation.

Many high school students want easy maintenance hairstyles so they may sleep in a bit longer each day, especially if they work after-school jobs that may keep them up late. Students involved in lab science classes such as chemistry, physics or biology will need styles that can be safely worn around chemicals, flames and other laboratory equipment.

At the same time, many high school students are pushing the boundaries of style to find ways to express themselves and their beliefs. Many parents may find these hair styles alarming or questionable, but there is no harm in letting students try new looks to find just what suits them.

### College Students: Sophisticated Styles

College students not only want to be trendy when creating their back-to-school look, but they also want to be sophisticated and taken seriously. A well-groomed haircut is essential particularly if a student has an internship or may be applying for professional jobs.



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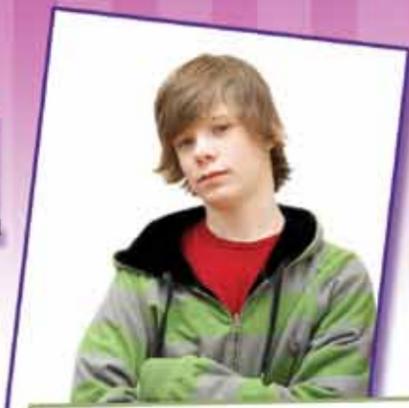
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# Lookin' Good in School

By Beth Ingham, Co-owner Lilac Bijoux



Back in school. 'member when that was a bad thing?

So the little darlings are back in the halls of knowledge. If you're like me, you can't help them with chemistry or trigonometry, but you can help them look good!

Let's start with the basics.

**Colors.** Deep purple, think mysterious and warm ooh-ahhh! Moss green, like camouflage, but prettier. Yellow, it carries over from summer, but this season it's burnt, like fall leaves as they start to change. So what will all those teens and tweens be wearing while they're texting and tweeting?

**Scarves.** Yup, they're not going away anytime soon. Not the "keep me warm on a snowy day" scarf, but the "wrap around the neck, and compliment my wardrobe" scarf. Experiment with color, size, fringes, whatever! They come in a vast variety, and are friendly to everyone's budget.

**Personal Statements.** Initial necklaces, birthstone rings, religious symbols, whatever identifies or makes one an individual. Isn't that what we want for our kids anyway?

**Messenger Bags.** These versatile beauties are good for the guys and the gals. They come in sizes just big enough for lip gloss and a smart phone, or large enough for a laptop. So much cooler than a backpack!

**Leather.** Ewe, I'm not excited about seeing a mall full of 15 year olds in \$400, skinny, leather pants! Let's accessorize with leather instead. Again, this is a unisex concept that everyone can enjoy. Leather bracelets are reasonably priced and come in all the fall colors. They can be layered for maximum style!

So there you have it. Now you're in-the-know. Your daughter will be impressed with your knowledge, and your son will appreciate the advice!

Well, maybe you'll get a smile, and that will have to do!

## Preston Automotive Is Proud To Host The Hill Family Bus Project!

Please Join Us In Spirit & In Sponsorship  
As We Help Make This A Dream Come True!

John Patrick Hill was killed in an accident this past spring. He was a loving husband, father of 6 children, a rescuer of abandoned animals & a lover of quirky busses! His wife, Amanda just didn't want to part with John's old bus-too many memories of family fun. When she brought it to B.J., at Preston AutoBody, he just knew this had to be a get- it- done deal. Of course, everything needed is not quite at the ready, but we've already had such a great response from local friends & associates.

If you would like to be a part of this great surprise for the Hill Family-as we completely renovate their bus in honor of John, their family & our community spirit-please contact Jo-Anna Sparta @ 410-770-6744 or Diana Vincent @410-673-7100. Anything any of us can do will help!

Many thanks to the Preston AutoBody Team, pictured below, for offering their enthusiasm, time & expertise. We will be documenting their work & sharing progress with all of you-thanks to *Single Parent 101 Magazine*.

Work In Progress- August 13th, 2009

The Preston AutoBody Team Hard At Work-Stripping Everything  
Off The Hill Family Bus Getting It Ready For A Brand New Face!



The bus will be unveiled at the MADD Golf Tournament  
at the Queenstown Golf Course on Sept 29th



# EDUCATIONAL VIDEO GAMES

*Isn't that an oxymoron?*

By Christa Puccio - Entertainment writer

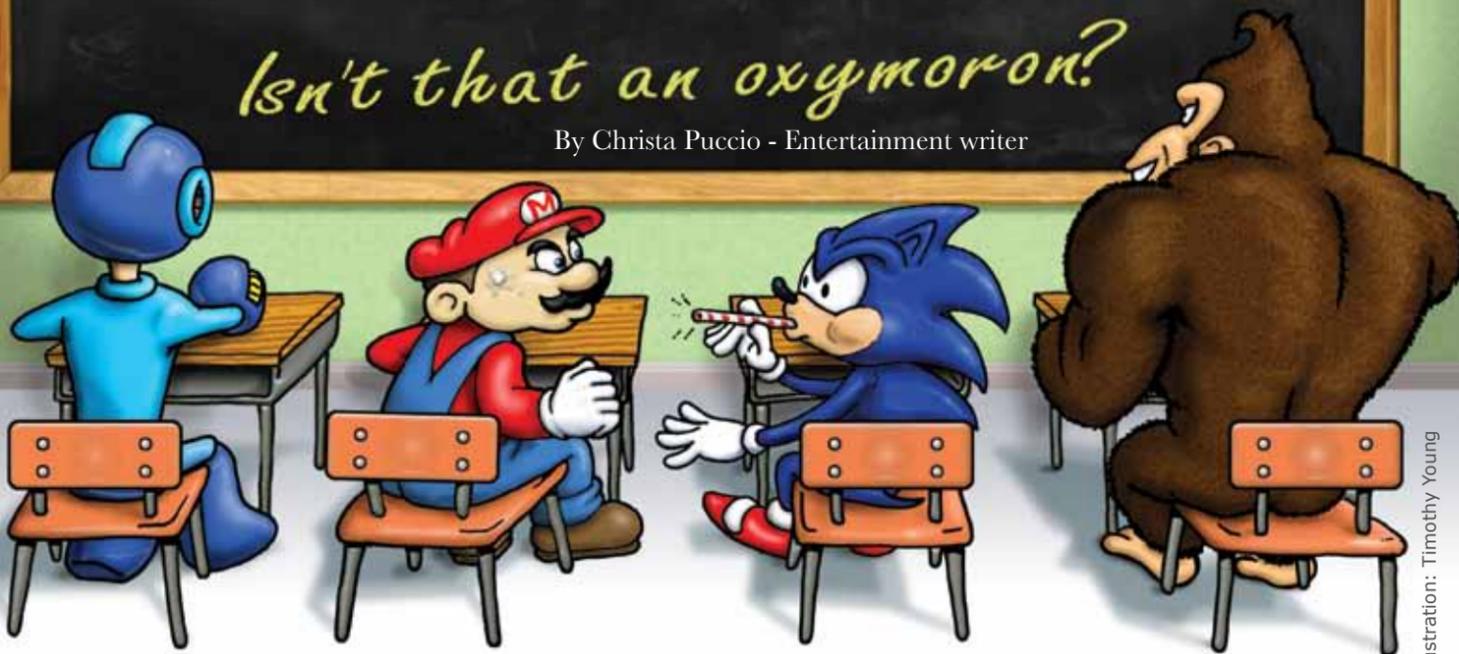


Illustration: Timothy Young

Don't believe the old saying, "Video games will rot your kid's mind." The right games are out there for your child, you just have to look. The Nintendo DS games are an easy way to stimulate your child's brain and let them have fun while they're at it.

If you type the word "educational" in an online game product search engine, you would think you should get a list of appropriate educational games, right? Wrong! But does that really mean that there aren't any? If there are educational video games out there, why are they so difficult to find? The only way you'll have any success with an online search is if you've already been referred to a specific game.

Nintendo DS has an impressive selection of games from which to choose. After all, if you're going to try to feed your child broccoli, you might as well have a variety of ways to put it on his or her plate. The same logic holds true with computer games.



## Brain Games

Three Nintendo games jump out from their listings just because of the names: "Left Brain Right Brain 2," "Big Brain Academy" and "Brain Age."

"Left Brain Right Brain 2" is a fun way to train your brain how to use your right and left hand equally with several timed mini-games. This game is appropriate for all ages and the mini-games are easily comprehensible.

"Big Brain Academy" challenges the gamer to memorize, identify, compute and analyze. This game not only does this with images, but incorporates sounds as well. A couple of the mini-games with sound might remind you of the 1980s electronic game "Simon." At the start of each mini-game, there is a tutor that explains the directions. After

completing the courses, the tutor weighs your child's brain and grades his or her performance – the more points, the heavier the brain, and thus the better the grade will be.

## Tutoring Games

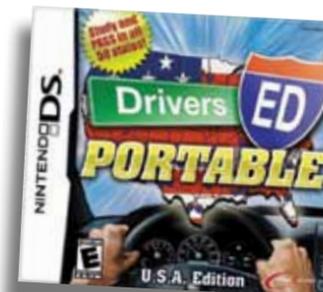
The Nintendo DS also has games that can tutor your teen for standardized tests. For example, would you rather pay by the hour for a private SAT tutor or save money on a tutorial SAT game? "My SAT Coach" is a great solution for that extra studying for the big test. And, your child would probably be more interested in playing a game and thus take more advantage of it as



opposed to sitting down with that thick SAT book right after they just finished an hour of calculus homework. Scoring well on the SAT could mean the difference between paying full tuition and receiving an academic scholarship.

## Driving Games

No teen likes to be the one who fails the driver's license test and still has to ride the school bus every day. DS offers a game called "Drivers Ed" that has multiple practice exams with the laws of the road for all 50 states. The game also teaches teens different valuable car lessons, like how to change a tire and check the oil.



## Puzzle Games

There are also dozens of thought provoking puzzle games, including popular games like "Tetris," "Sudoku," and "Brain Buster Puzzle Pak" with multiple well-known puzzles all in one

If you want to find your own educational games online, note that the commonly used game rating system (ESRB) doesn't allow for an educational category. You may want to contain your search to the "E" category, which is meant to denote that the game is appropriate for "Everyone."



# Fall in Love

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# ADD SOME SPICE TO YOUR LIFE!

By Chef Mike Timm

*There are many ways to spice up your life by adding a dash of this and a splash of that to your food. Let's go to the kitchen and take a spin around your spice rack as I share some helpful hints to awaken your taste buds.*

Spice blends are always part of a chef's arsenal. We all have our favorite self-made concoctions, and a few on hand that have withstood the test of time.

From the very basic grill spice of salt, pepper and granulated garlic to the most intricate moles and curries, I have had the pleasure of working with and adapting quite a few spice blends. Commercially, I have found a couple of blends that I use as a base to create ethnic blends with some success. My favorites are Paul Prudhomme's Blackened Redfish Magic, McCormick's Caribbean Jerk Seasoning and RL Shreiber's Pickling Spice. Keep in mind the blackening spice has a bit of salt and can be overdone if you're not paying attention.

I add cumin, chili powder and a touch of coriander to the redfish magic to make a southwest seasoning. A splash of jerk spice with curry, ginger and a dash of nutmeg mixed with chicken, mayo, shredded coconut and dried cranberries makes a great curried chicken salad to wrap in lettuce leaves. Serve this over baby spinach or in a tortilla wrap.

The Jerk spice also adds a nice dimension to Thai spice.

The pickling spice is wonderful in brining both seafood and meats, poaching salmon or adding flavor to a slow roasted corned beef. Both the magic and jerk seasonings are great on their own. When blackening, use a very hot skillet (at home I use the outside grill to keep from setting off the smoke alarm) to attain a nice dark sear. Do not heavily spice your seafood or vegetables as it will overpower the natural flavors. Coat chicken and pork with a light to medium amount before grilling or pan searing, even adding a touch of jerk seasoning to give it an Island flavor.



Thick cuts of beef or lamb should be rubbed with a liberal coating of spice and allowed to rest for a few minutes before cooking. Once you have a good sear, either finish the dish in the oven or let rest for serving depending on the temperature that you like for your meats.

The jerk seasoning is particularly good on chicken wings and as a rub for pork loin. It is a little spicy so don't overdo it. One of my favorite dishes ever was jerk seared wild boar chops over tropical fruit (mangoes and papaya). I cheated a little and deglazed the pan with ginger and apricot brandy for the fruit ... definitely worth it.

So don't be afraid to doctor up a few spice blends or create your own. It's a great feeling when you get one just right.

School is in session so quick meals become an important part of our lives. The spices I mentioned above and the variations that you come up with can be useful in adding a little flair to your quick dishes.

When I was shopping and cooking for the kids on my own, I would plan out about a week's worth of meals with a few leftovers to have ready for them to make a sandwich or throw in the microwave. A couple of our favorites were seared pork tenderloin, blackened London broil, and southwest chicken breast. Each of these items is relatively inexpensive and will cook quickly with just a little prep time. Each of these is also very versatile. You can slice and place them over a favorite salad, or as an entrée with some fresh vegetables and potatoes or pasta. The next day or so, each can be sliced

or chopped, sautéed quickly with peppers, onions and mushrooms, topped with a little provolone and stuffed in a French roll to make a really good sandwich. They are equally good simmered in taco seasoning and a dash of water, served with seasoned rice, tortillas and beans and you have a fajita meal.



To sear a pork tenderloin, coat it lightly with a simple or more complex spice that you and your family enjoy, sear it in a non-stick skillet over a medium to high flame, turning and browning each side for about two minutes each. Remove the pork to a baking dish and let finish in a 325 degree oven. Depending on the thickness of the loin it should take another 15 minutes or so. If you have a pencil meat thermometer (and I highly recommend that you get one), you are looking to bring the tenderloin to about 140 degrees in the thick part before removing to let rest for five minutes. Yes, I said 140 degrees. It should come up to about 150 after resting and is perfectly safe while remaining moist. (Gone are the old days where pork needed to be cooked well to kill parasites.)



While the pork is in the oven, stir your favorite Uncle Ben's quick rice blend into the boiling water I forgot to tell you to start first (just follow the directions on the box - that or Zatarain's are both pretty good).

The pan in which you seared the pork has some wonderful leftover flavors that you are now going to

retrieve. I use a little leftover wine I keep in the back of the fridge and deglaze the pan under medium heat, stirring with a high temperature spatula or wooden spoon so as not to damage the pan. Just a pinch of salt, thyme and pepper as your taste dictates is nice. In a minute or two, add some raspberry or blackberry preserves (to red wine), just enough to make a sweet sauce. If you used a white wine, try apricot or peach preserves. Stir the sauce until just thickened and covers the spoon. Turn the heat off and let sit.

Then, in a microwave safe container, place a small amount of cut green beans, corn or broccoli with a dash of water, butter, salt and pepper. Seal the container with plastic wrap or its own lid. Make sure the container has just a little tiny space open so it doesn't blow up in the microwave. Just have the veggies ready - it's the last thing you need to do as it only takes about two to three minutes under high setting.



Okay, so the pork is almost done in the oven, the sauce is done, the veggies are in the microwave waiting to go, and the rice is almost, if not done. If the kids are sufficiently starved they will be nearby; otherwise, time to round them up. Text them!?

As you pull the pork from the oven to let rest, start the veggies. Get your plates out and place a portion of rice on each. If you want to get fancy, use a small fruit dish or soufflé cup to mold the rice and carefully tap on to the plate. Slice the pork on a slight bias, but always across the grain and arrange in a fan along the inner edge of the plate leaving a little gap



for the veggies. As the veggies finish, toss them lightly in the butter sauce made in the cooking process, then serve them on a plate. Spoon the pan sauce over the pork. The other option would be to ladle the sauce onto the plate and arrange the pork over the sauce. Either way, you're done.

The same process can be repeated over and over again with chicken and steak. Just use different combinations of spices, side dishes and temperatures. Chicken – 160 degrees and steak anywhere from rare at 120 degrees to well-done at 160 degrees.

I will finish with one important thought that was omitted in the last article. Please, try to not trash your ex in front of the kids. It can be so destructive. My parents did not practice restraint in this area. Sometimes they deserved the negativity, sometimes they didn't, but it always hurt us in some fashion or another. It took us many years to recover. Even when it takes all you have, take the high road. Trust me. In the long run it will make a difference.

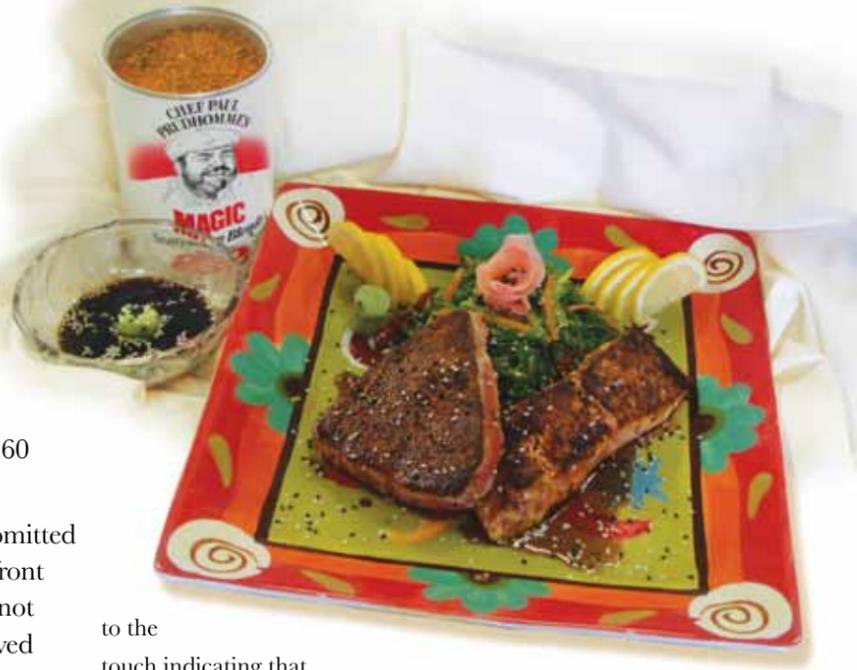
As they say in my family, food is love, share the love!

Have a great fall. See you for the Holidays!

### **Recipe: Seared Tuna or Salmon over Salad**

You can use a hot grill, but I prefer a skillet or sautee pan over medium high heat.

Either way, preseason your pan or grill with vegetable oil before it gets hot and again later, just before cooking. I use a kitchen rag dipped in the oil to season my pans, and a spray on vegetable oil for the grill. There will be some smoke involved, so if your fan system can't handle it, you may want to put a skillet right on the grill, other wise you will find yourself waving this magazine at the smoke detector to get it quiet. Make the seaweed salad earlier that day or even a day ahead. If you want to serve your salmon or tuna over a Caesar salad, wait till the last minute to toss and plate your salad. Newman's is a good store-bought Caesar Dressing if you don't have a recipe. While your pan and/or grill are getting hot, sprinkle a light to medium coating of Paul Prudhomme's Blackened Redfish Magic on each side of your fish. Do not cake on the blackening spice – it will totally overpower the dish. Ideally, your tuna steaks should be about an inch thick and your salmon filets about 1/2 inch or more. Use a 6 to 8 ounce portion size depending on your crew. Place the filets or steaks in the hot skillet and let cook for about 1 1/2 to 2 minutes or until a nice sear is achieved. Turn the fish and continue searing the other side. I recommend medium rare tuna - you should still see a little color on the sides and the middle should give a little



to the touch indicating that it hasn't cooked through. Medium Salmon is my favorite - just a bit firmer and just a hint of color on the sides. If you want to cook your fish a little longer, just be careful not to burn the coating, turn the fish every minute or so. It should be dark, and little black here and there, but again, we're talking seafood. On the subtle side is good, and you don't want to dry it out. Generally I recommend that you cook your tuna the same way you would have your steak in a restaurant, and your salmon just done. Fish only needs to rest for a minute, so have your plates ready. As a garnish I like lemon, pickled ginger, wasabi paste and a touch of soy or teriyaki, but I'm a sauce fanatic. It will be just fine with lemon and the dressing from what ever salad you choose to serve with it.

### **Seaweed Salad Recipe (4 to 6 portions)**

- Seaweed - 1 lb
- Cucumbers - 1 each Halved, cored sliced thin on a bias
- Julienne Carrot 1 each
- Julienne Red and/or Yellow Peppers - 1/2 cup
- Julienne Red Onion - 1/2 cup

#### **Dressing:**

- Toasted Sesame Oil - 2 T
- Seasoned Rice wine Vinegar - 2 T
- Balsamic Vinegar - 2 T
- Cream Sherry - 2 t
- Salt - pinch
- Black Pepper - pinch

The plain seaweed salad is available in most grocery stores and seafood markets. It's good on its own, but I like the doctored version to change up the textures and flavors. Make Dressing in separate bowl. Mix all other ingredients in a large mixing bowl, gently pulling apart the seaweed to get an even mix. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and remix. Store chilled in plastic.

# Second-Hand Shopping:

*In With The Old, Out With The New...  
for back-to-school shopping and decorating your home.*



By Diana Paladino

When you suddenly find yourself single, controlling your finances becomes a huge burden, not only for yourself, but your children as well. This strain affects your wallet and your state of mind. Suddenly, the life you once knew is over and a completely new way of life takes over. Goodbye Nordstrom, Lord and Taylor and Macy's; hello "consignment shop"!

***Antique and consignment shops are all great sources for finding furniture at drastically reduced prices. Sometimes, with mere tweaking, the item takes on a completely new life, allowing you to furnish your new home on a budget.***

The downturned economy has made this a booming time for second-hand shops. Edith Turner of Lowery-Turner Antiques in Stevensville, Md., owns a second-hand shop that carries everything from jewelry, books, pots and pans, linens, collectible glass to a huge selection of antique and used furniture. Her shop is off the beaten path; however, people looking to save money and add a little character to their home have discovered her unusual and meticulously organized shop.

Consignment shopping, antiquing and "finding the best deal" has actually become trendy. In part, we can thank Hollywood for the

interest in "vintage" clothing. Barbara Streisand will be selling off warehouses of her clothing and furniture she has collected over the years. Even stars know how to clean out their closets.

Oprah Winfrey has also joined the cause and opened a store across from her studio for the sole purpose of selling clothing she no longer needs. Talk about the hot ticket in

town! How about all those college students? They not only made second-hand shopping a mainstay in their vocabulary, but also contributed to the frenzy of taking on their own sought-after style.

Design schools now stress the importance of seeking out unusual, vintage materials and implementing them in the student's designs. Following the trend to sell that high end item for half the price, major retailers are bringing old pieces back to life.

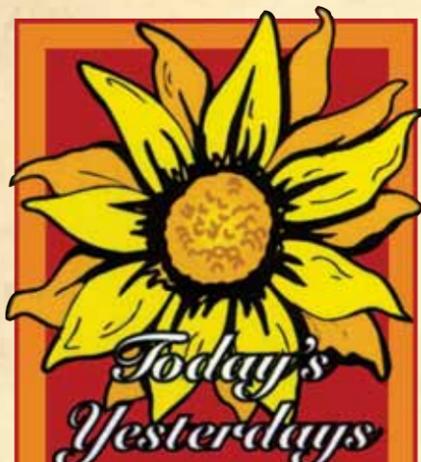
However, let us not forget the other side of the coin. It is also an innovative way to make a little extra cash for used clothing and furniture.

Whether these are items you no longer need, downsizing from a larger home or just cleaning out your closets, you can profit.

Antique and consignment shops are all great sources for finding furniture at drastically reduced prices. Sometimes, with mere tweaking, the item takes on a completely new life, allowing you to furnish your new home on a budget.

Anna Marie, of Village Inn Antiques in Grasonville, Md., has been a single mother for 20 years. She has struggled to provide a comfortable home and maintain the income needed to support her three young girls. A dedicated thrift shopper, she began attending auctions to purchase used furniture. With her eye for style, she would strip the furniture, reinforce the broken parts and refinish the piece. Slowly, she found her home not only taking shape but also turning into a quaint and comfortable home for her family. She discovered that her talent and eye for seeing the beauty in a broken down, tattered piece of furniture was also a way to provide an income for the family. She has added a barn to her existing property and runs her business from her home.

Even though it may be a little hard to find, a walk through the quaint little barn on Marshy Creek Road



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is worth the effort. As you stroll through the inviting room groupings of furniture, the homey feel makes you want to pull out a chair and stay a while.

Anna Marie has come a long way from those first days of tinkering with furniture and attempting to decorate her home. Her warm personality and sharp business sense have helped her to provide a warm and stable environment for her children. Her creative sense of decorating has also helped other single parents on a budget decorate their homes with not only furniture purchased at her shop, but also by showing them how to recycle and refinish existing pieces, giving their new environment a warm and homey feeling.

Single parents soon develop a talent of learning how to make money by being resourceful and thinking creatively. When you are suddenly faced with the chore of back-to-school shopping on a budget, consignment shops fit the bill perfectly.

Most parents know that children not only grow out of most of their clothes after one season, but they also become bored with what they consider last year's fashions. As the saying goes, "one person's trash is another one's treasure," and combing through consignment shops and antique shops will save you a lot of money. Mothers entering the work force for the first time will be amazed at how inexpensively they can put together a business wardrobe.

Here are some tips to make second-hand buying and selling not only enjoyable but exciting.

1. Do not rely on marked sizes. Remember, things have been washed, shrinkage does occur.

2. Check your own closets. Is there clothing that hasn't been worn in a few years? Have the children grown out of their clothes? Have you gained or lost some weight and no longer fit into that favorite outfit? Get rid of it! Wash it, iron it, make an appointment and take it to a consignment shop. Remember most will sell by season, winter or summer. So pack away the off-season and sell it later in the year.

3. The commission will vary depending on the shop, but the norm is somewhere in the range of 40 to 50 percent. The same goes for furniture. Is it too big for your new home? Are you tired of looking at that old table? Anything goes, make a little money on it.

4. Not all consignment and antique shops are created equal. When you are looking to buy or sell, ask around to find out who has a good reputation. Where is everyone else shopping? Are the clothes organized in an easy to find manner or are they just thrown on a generic rack? Do the furniture and clothes smell nice or do they have a musky old smell?

5. How are the prices? When you are looking to buy, of course everyone wants a deal, but when you are selling, you want to make sure you get the most for your items. A fair price is a good rule of thumb to follow. Would you be willing to buy it at the price offered? Is it less than at a retail store, even on sale? Are customers making purchases?

6. Remember, just because you found it at a second-hand shop does not mean it cannot be resold. Do you need a nice outfit for an interview? Are you going to a special party? Is your child in need of that "wear it once" miniature jacket? Shop smart, purchase it, wear it, clean it and resell it!

7. Take note of their payment policy. Find out when their payment date is for the items you have for sale. Remember you may not get \$50 for that \$80 dress you wore to a Christmas party. They may sell it for \$40 and your take would be anywhere from \$16 to \$20. Most consignment shops will put things on sale that have been there for a month. That \$80 dress could very well go for \$20 with a profit to you of \$8 to \$10. Make sure you are prepared to accept that selling price. Also, remember you are making money rather than just throwing it in the trash.

8. When antiquing, make sure you are at a reputable shop. Check to see how sturdy those chairs are that go with that beautiful antique barn table. Do the drawers slide in and out smoothly? If you are purchasing

something unassembled, make sure you have all the pieces and have the store list them for you when you leave.

9. Remember, everyone wins in the consignment/antique shops. The seller makes a little money on something they may have thrown away. The buyer gets a great deal on a gently used piece of clothing or furniture and the management gets an override on the deal.

Next time you are traveling or simply want to go on a bargaining adventure, take time to get out of the traffic and explore some antique and consignment shops. We mentioned a few in the towns of Stevensville, Chester and Grasonville, Md., but they are everywhere. You will find not only welcoming, friendly folks, but you will leave with some incredible bargains.

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# Give Pause Before You Add Paws To Your Life

by Brittany Henry

Now that you are a single parent, is it the right time to bring a new pet into the household?

Pets can add great joy to your family with their companionship and comfort as well as entertainment. However, before bringing a pet into your household, there are some important things you should consider, courtesy of Aileen Gabbey, executive director of The Maryland SPCA.



**First, animals take money, time and patience.** Being a single parent, you are already pulled in many different directions. Make sure your child is ready to help out with the responsibilities. Aileen says, "Your child can participate in caring for your new pet. This will help teach responsibility. This could include feeding, cleaning and exercising the new pet."

**Second, remember that animals need constant care and attention.**

Between buying food, vet visits and trips to the groomers, pets can be quite expensive. Also, you must allot time each day to walk, play with and show love to your pet. "Remember that you as the parent will be the primary caregiver," says Aileen. "Make sure the pet makes you happy, too."

**Third, look at your current situation and decide if it's the right time to adopt.** Talk it over, think about it, plan ahead and figure out when will be the best time based on your new family situation.

Here are some other tips from The Maryland SPCA:

- **Involve your child in selecting your new pet. Have them meet and be sure that everyone is happy about the selection.**
- **If your child is young, make sure you supervise pet and youngster. Never leave them alone together.**
- **Be a good role model on how to treat pets – be kind and responsible in caring for your new pet.**
- **Have fun with the new pet as a family – go on outings together such as hikes or play games at home.**

With the current economic situation, fewer animals are being adopted and more are being euthanized. If you think you are ready to adopt here are some local animal shelters and resources to check out, courtesy of MarylandPet.com.



## Anne Arundel County

### Anne Arundel County Animal Control Center & Shelter

411 Maxwell Frye Road  
Millersville, MD 21108  
410-222-8900  
<http://www.aacounty.org/AnimalControl/>

### Cool Cats Rescue & Adoptions

P.O. Box 4481  
Annapolis, MD 21403  
410-353-7797  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/coolcats.html>

### SPCA of Anne Arundel County

1815 Bay Ridge Avenue,  
P.O. Box 3471  
Annapolis, MD 21403  
410-268-4388  
<http://www.aacspca.org/>



## Baltimore County & City

### Adopt a Homeless Animal

P.O. Box 65351  
Baltimore, MD 21209  
410-239-0771  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD86.html>

### Alley Animals, Inc.

P.O. Box 27487  
Towson, MD 21285  
410-823-0899  
<http://www.alleyanimals.org/>

### Animal Rescue, Inc.

897 Heritage Farm Drive  
New Freedom, Pennsylvania  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 35,  
Maryland Line, MD 21105  
717-993-3232  
<http://www.animalrescueinc.org/>

### Association for Animal Rights

67 Main Street  
Reisterstown, MD 21136  
410-526-5224  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD77.html>

### Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, Inc. (BARCS)

301 Stockholm Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
410-396-4688, 410-396-4689,  
410-396-4695 or 410-396-4696  
<http://www.baltimoreanimalshelter.org/>

### Callie Cats

P.O. Box 6238  
Baltimore, MD 21206  
<http://www.adoptablepets.net/callie.html>

### Defenders of Animal Rights

14412 Old York Road  
Phoenix, MD 21131  
410-527-1466  
<http://www.adopt-a-pet.org/>

### Diana's Animal Rescue

Baltimore, Maryland  
410-265-4529

### Humane Society of Baltimore County

1601 Nicodemus Road  
Reisterstown, MD 21136  
410-833-8848  
<http://www.baltimorehumane.org/>

### Knine Rescue

Baltimore, Maryland  
410-615-7637  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD188.html>

### Furry Friends

1539 Merritt Boulevard  
P.O. Box 153  
Baltimore, MD 21222  
410-282-8602  
<http://furryfriendsrescue.bravehost.com/>

### Maryland SPCA

3300 Falls Road  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
410-235-8826  
<http://www.mdspca.org/>

### Roberts Rescue

Baltimore, Maryland  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD178.html>



## Calvert County

### Animal House

Lusby, Maryland 20657  
410-394-6206

### Calvert Animal Welfare League

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1660  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
Shelter Address: 1040 Prince Frederick Blvd,  
Prince Frederick, MD 20678  
410-535-9300  
<http://www.cawl.us/>

### Chesapeake SPCA

P.O. Box 506  
Chesapeake Beach, MD 20732  
301-855-6950

### Humane Society of Calvert County

2210 Dalrymple Road  
P.O. Box 3505  
Sunderland, MD 20678  
410-257-4908  
<http://www.calvertcountyhumanesociety.org/>

### Patuxent Animal Welfare Society, Inc. (PAWS)

237 Deer Drive  
Lusby, MD 20657  
410 326-1616  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD69.html>



### Caroline County

#### Caroline County Humane Society

407 West Bell Street  
Ridgely, MD 21660  
410-820-1600  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD11.html>

### Carroll County

#### Humane Society of Carroll County

2517 Littlestown Pike  
Westminster, MD 21158  
410-848-4810  
<http://www.carr.org/humane/>

#### Tails of Hope Sanctuary

P.O. Box 875  
Mt. Airy, MD 21771  
410-549-4760  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD102.html>

### Howard County

#### Animal Welfare Society of Howard County

8556 Davis Road  
Columbia, MD 21045  
410-465-4350  
<http://www.howardcountypets.org/>

#### Howard County Animal Control Center & Shelter

8576 Davis Road  
Columbia, MD 21045  
410-313-2780  
<http://www.animal-advocates.org/>

#### Kathy Graningers Puppy Rescue

Glenelg, Maryland 21737  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD187.html>

#### Pampered Paws Rescue, Inc.

3355-C St. John's Lane, Box 115,  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
410-750-0992

### Kent County

#### Humane Society of Kent County

10720 Augustine Herman Highway  
Chestertown, MD 21620  
410-778-3648  
<http://www.kenthumane.org/index.htm>



### Montgomery County

#### All Breed Rescue and Referral

Gaithersburg, Maryland  
301-482-2543  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD27.html>

#### Animal Protection Alliance

Takoma Park, Maryland  
301-270-4774  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD141.html>

#### Best DAWG Rescue, Inc.

P.O. Box 34213  
Bethesda, MD 20827  
301-407-BEST  
<http://www.dawg-rescue.org/>

### Friends of Montgomery County Animals Inc.

P.O. Box 386  
Germantown, MD 20875  
301-977-4833  
<http://www.fmca.freeservers.com/>

#### Hedgesville Hounds

Rockville, Maryland 20850  
240-793-9715  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD149.html>

#### Montgomery County Animal Control

2350 Research Boulevard,  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-773-5690

#### Montgomery County Humane Society

14645 Rothgeb Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
240-773-5960  
[www.mchumane.org](http://www.mchumane.org)

#### Montgomery County SPCA

402 Diamond Avenue,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
301-948-4266  
<http://www.mcspca.org/>

#### Roxie's Fund, Inc.

Silver Spring, Maryland 20902  
301-962-7509  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD49.html>

#### Tara's House Animal Rescue, Inc.

P.O. Box 7400  
Silver Spring, MD 20907  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD147.html>



### Prince George's County

#### Companion Animal Rescue Alliance (CARA)

7305 Hopkins Avenue, College Park  
MD 20740  
301-422-3677 (Mailbox 2)  
<http://cara-adopt.org/>

### Laurel City Police Department/Animal Control

350 Municipal Square  
Laurel, MD 20707  
301-498-0092  
<http://www.pets911.com/organizations/laurelac/>

#### Partnership for Animal Welfare

P.O. Box 1074  
Greenbelt, MD 20768  
301-572-4729 (4PAW)  
<http://www.paw-rescue.org/>

#### SPCA/HS of Prince George's County

P.O. Box 925  
Bowie, MD 20718  
301-262-5625  
<http://www.pgspca.org/>

### Queen Anne's County

#### Animal Resource Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 396  
Chester, MD 21619  
443-249-0346  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD158.html>

#### Queen Anne's County Dept. of Animal Control & Shelter

201 Clay Drive  
Queenstown, MD 21658  
410-758-2393  
<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/MD81.html>

### Somerset County

#### Humane Society of Somerset County

P. O. Box 545, Crisfield, MD 21817  
410-422-2497

### Talbot County

#### Talbot County Humane Society

7894 Ocean Gateway  
P.O. Box 1143  
Easton, MD 21601  
410-822-0107  
<https://www.tchsm.org/>

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# It's Back-to-School for All of Us

## Remarriage and Blending Stepfamilies Requires a Higher Education

By Paula Bisacre, Founder of Remarriage LLC

**Divorce rates for second marriages are even higher than for first, with some reports citing rates of 60 to 70 percent. And, the rate increases by approximately 10 percent for each subsequent remarriage.**

You have scurried around store aisles with your children looking for that elusive red marbled notebook or that purple highlighter. You've stocked up on socks, odd-sized jeans and the latest style of shirts. You've worked tremendously hard preparing for your children to go back to school. For you single moms and dads, this may be the perfect time of year to consider going back to school yourselves. Only this time, it isn't for a degree. For those who wish to remarry one day, now may be the perfect time to consider marriage education.

Few people are surprised anymore when they hear the divorce rate is between 40 to 50 percent for first marriages. But, people often are taken aback when they learn that within five years of divorcing, 89 percent of men and 79 percent of women remarry. In fact, about 75 percent of divorced persons eventually remarry, according to the National Stepfamily Resource Center, a division of Auburn University's Center for Children, Youth and Families. This is substantiated by Single Parent 101's on-line poll that shows that most of you would consider remarriage.

During my speaking engagements about remarriage with divorce groups, I have asked participants to write down a few words that come to mind when they hear

the word "remarriage." The responses certainly vary and fear is sometimes very evident in "pre-nup," "panic," and "hell no!" But, more often than not, they jot down positive ideas such as, "happiness," "second chance," and "hope." However, as the famous line goes, hope is not a method.

Divorce rates for second marriages are even higher than for first, with some reports citing rates of 60 to 70 percent. And, the rate increases by approximately 10 percent for each subsequent remarriage. So, how can this be? It sounds counter intuitive. After all, one would think that divorced people are experienced and have learned from their mistakes. Remarrying and raising a stepfamily has unique challenges; it is very different, especially if you remarry with children. And, even if your children are grown adults, there can still be many difficult issues.

Having been remarried for over six years, I've faced many challenges, and I'm still learning from errors I have made. My husband and I often say that if we had to do it all over again, we would have sought out more marriage education before we remarried and started this adventure of blending a stepfamily of seven. We went to pre-marriage

preparation sessions with the chaplain who performed our wedding ceremony and read some books about stepfamily blending. These steps were definitely helpful, but not adequate. When we were engaged, we weren't aware of so many other marriage education resources, especially those in the stepfamily blending realm. These resources would have even been helpful to me even before I became engaged to remarry. I highly recommend them to anyone if you think you may remarry one day.

There are many organizations dedicated to providing marriage education. Some notable nonprofit organizations that provide a wealth of information helpful to those who remarry are:

- National Stepfamily Resource Center ([www.stepfamilies.info](http://www.stepfamilies.info))
- National Family Resiliency Center ([www.divorceabc.com](http://www.divorceabc.com))
- California Healthy Marriages Coalition ([www.camarriage.com](http://www.camarriage.com))
- Changing Focus ([www.changingfocus.org](http://www.changingfocus.org))

In addition, many churches provide programs designed specifically for remarriage. If you aren't interested in a religious-based program, you may want to look for a stepfamily support group. These

groups, although sometimes difficult to find, are very worthwhile. We joined a stepfamily support group after we were remarried, but in hindsight, I wish we had joined before we were remarried so we would have had a better idea of what to expect. Hearing the insights of people who have been successfully remarried for many years can be very enlightening.

If you aren't interested in attending support groups, consider exploring on-line groups, blogs and podcasts. Although, be wary of on-line discussion groups that focus on solely negative discussions; some have become major gripe sessions and will not be very helpful as you try to prepare yourself for a healthy remarriage. Surround yourself with positive influences and forums that offer solutions to problems because negativity will breed negativity. For a great website, blog and podcast, visit [www.becomingastepmom.com](http://www.becomingastepmom.com), founded by Jacquie B. Fletcher, author of "A Career Girl's Guide to Becoming a Stepmom." Her book provides expert advice on how to juggle your job, your marriage and your new stepkids.

I've barely scratched the surface of what is out there in terms of marriage education, and I look forward to sharing additional information in future columns to help enable successful remarriages.



**The Phillips Wharf Environmental Center (PWEC)** was created to provide a hands-on experience, especially for children, with the animals and plants that inhabit the Chesapeake Bay region. In addition to learning about the environment, visitors also learn how the Chesapeake Bay Watermen harvest the bay's resources.



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## Understanding Maryland child support and visitation laws

By Toby Byrd, attorney-at-law



Many of you have questions regarding child support that this article will attempt to answer.

Some years ago, the Maryland legislature determined that certain state courts were awarding child support based on widely different factors. This made it extraordinarily hard to predict the outcome in a custody and child support case. One judge might award considerably more than another judge even though the cases were similar.

### The formula

The legislature finally removed some of that guesswork and established a formula that determines child support. Now, child support is much more a result of mathematics than other subjective factors. The essential elements of the formula are based on the income of the father and the income of the mother with small adjustments based on childcare costs, health insurance and medical costs. A judge is able to but rarely considers other factors.

Once the calculations are complete, the court will require the noncustodial parent to pay the required amount of child support to the custodial parent. Since this payment is for the support of the child, courts rarely waive or change the payment even if the parents agree to something different. This reluctance is based on the theory that the parent is not in a position to give away a benefit due to the child.

### Visitation

Another issue arising often for single parents is the relationship of visitation and child support. Often a parent will want to withhold visitation because the other parent is behind or has completely ignored a court-ordered child support obligation. The court requires a complete separation of the two concepts. A parent may not withhold visitation on the theory that somehow the other parent has forfeited his or her right to visitation by not paying child support. It is true that if a case reaches the courtroom, the judge may

not treat the two concepts completely independently but a parent should not initiate the retribution.

### Enforcing child support

Finally, child support does not become an enforceable obligation until an action is filed to seek child support and an order is signed by the court. Therefore, a parent wishing to pursue child support cannot simply rely on the other parent's promise to pay or hope that the parties can work it out at a later date.

The court does have the ability to make the child support retroactive to the date a child support action was filed. This can be significant if it takes some time to get into court. Even after the court rules on the support, custody and visitation issues, it retains jurisdiction to reconsider what is in the best interest of the child should things change before the child reaches majority. If, after the court signs an order awarding child support, and there is a substantial change in circumstances, the court can look at the previous decision and change the order if the facts warrant such a change. Again, the court will not do anything to change the standing court order unless one of the parties initiates a request with the court.

The legislature has placed a high priority on providing support for minor children in Maryland and has provided a mechanism to secure funds to carry out that objective. Of course, the system is not without pitfalls and some uncertainty but there is at least a starting point if you are faced with the task of raising children as a single parent.

In most circumstances, you should contact your local attorney to navigate child support, custody and visitation issues for your specific case. Call your state or local bar association to help you locate the best courtroom advocate for you and your children.

## Living Wisely... Ask Samantha



Welcome to our new column. We hope you will find practical suggestions as you endeavor to raise your children to live independent, productive and successful lives.

My goal as a married parent did not change when I became single. I wanted to raise children who grew to be well-balanced, self-sufficient, educated, and God-reliant adults who loved me, wanted me but didn't need me. As I traveled the road through divorce, family court, single parenting and remarriage ... that goal remained. I had to teach by example in some pretty difficult circumstances.

Raising children is the hardest job anyone will undertake. Ask any parent, married or single. The chance to go sit at my desk or talk with clients is infinitely easier than worrying if I've done a good job with my children – or are they safe at night – and mine are all grown!

I will share with you a glimpse into my life and the life of my clients. Names are changed for everyone's benefit. We do not get to choose all of the cards we are dealt in life, but we do choose how we play our hand. Today, eight years after my ex left, we are healed, happy and successful. We are not wealthy or famous, but we are living life with hope, love, friends and family. That is living wisely.

**Q. Samantha, I am separated from my husband with custody of our two children. While we've been able to communicate OK about our children, his mother is creating problems. She has called our older son, who is 15, and tried to blame me for this separation while it's her son who wants the divorce. We've never had a bad relationship, just not close. I have enough worry without her making things worse. It makes me so angry at her on top everything. What should I do? – Janice, FL**

**A.** Dear Janice: You are only human; I'd be angry, too. But, it's how you handle the anger that counts. First, don't let your children see you in a rage over her. This just isn't that big of a deal. She's doing what any mother of a disappointing son would do, finding a scapegoat—you. The easiest path may be to ask your ex to talk to his mother. But this takes control of the conversation away from you. I'd suggest you call her up and explain that you don't want to put her in the middle of your divorce, that you've appreciated (or a simple compliment) her through the years, but please refrain from discussing the divorce with the children. You and your ex are trying to shield them from as much as possible. Don't mention your son. Don't quote anything he said. You don't want him to have to defend what he's said to you, false accusations, etc. Don't discuss your ex. Just keep it light and pleasant. Be gracious and strong.

**Do you have a question for Samantha? Email your questions directly to her at: [Samantha@DivorceWisdom.com](mailto:Samantha@DivorceWisdom.com)**

What does your son say? Does it upset him that his grandmother is making these statements? I would be more concerned for your children than dealing with her. Keeping the line of communication open between you is very important. Acknowledge their pain and fear over the divorce. Tell them—daily—how much you love them, are glad you get to have them in your life, how proud you are of them. Assure them their dreams and goals are still possible. Assure them your support will never end.

**Q. Dear Samantha, When should I bring home my date for an "overnight" visit? I've been single for three years, my only child is 7 and lives with his mom, but I have him two weekends a month. When should I introduce him to my dates? – Robert, VA**

**A.** Dear Robert: There's not enough space to discuss everything a parent should consider to your question, so I'll be blunt. You don't. Period. You take care of any romantic interludes without your child. If you should find someone and marry, of course, your child would be in your life as you are now married and living together. But no child likes to think about their parents having sex – it's icky! And the morals and values you live are what you will teach your child. So for now...you don't. Dad's just a dad today.

## GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT – ONE TEEN AT A TIME

### *Teen Moms Friends Club reaches out to teenage single parents*

By Linda Blachly, Managing Editor

In 1992, when Tanya Taylor found herself alone with a baby to raise after her husband left, she desperately looked for support to help her get through this trying time. She opened a daycare so she could raise her daughter and bring in an income.

***I promised God that when I was able, I would help others not go through the things that we had been through.***

When her daughter went to kindergarten, she closed the daycare and went to school herself to pursue a nursing and psychology degree, living on a part-time income. At one point, she found herself homeless and on food stamps. “I was in school, on the Dean’s list and a homeless single parent,” said Tanya, who said the only way she made it through college classes was because her instructors understood her situation and allowed her to bring her daughter to class with her. She continues to work on her degree.

“I promised God that when I was able, I would help others not to go through the things we had been through,” said Tanya.

Fast forward to 2007. Tanya is now happily remarried and her daughter, now 16, and her 17-year-old boyfriend want to have a baby. “I tried to explain to them what it would be like,” said Tanya. She searched for parenting classes for teens and didn’t find much there. She did enroll her daughter



Tanya’s daughter Sam with Carissa

in one she found in Howard County. “She earned a certificate but learned nothing,” said Tanya, whose daughter succeeded in the planned pregnancy and delivered Tanya’s granddaughter 18 months ago.

With everything Tanya and her daughter had been through, why didn’t she listen to her mom? “Because she wanted to create her own perfect family, making up for what she didn’t have as a child,” said Tanya. “Unfortunately, many teens fall for that promise of a ‘white picket fence’ fallacy. I hear that over and over again from teens.”

Now Tanya has the new, young family living with her, and her daughter lives the reality of what her mom tried to warn her about. Last year Tanya made good on that promise to God and now has an even bigger resolve: to educate teens and support young single parents through Teen Moms Friends Club, a nonprofit 501(c)3 charitable organization.

Launched in May 2008, Teen Moms Friends Club provides educational activities to help young parents work toward a more promising, secure future. The club offers fun group activities to promote friendships, assistance, educational support and the resources they need to provide for themselves and their families.

The organization provides programs such as Young Moms and Dads S.H.A.R.E., which are designed to strengthen and encourage young moms and dads through a variety of workshops, such as parenting, financial planning, resume building and job preparation.

In the “Tell it Like it Is” program,” Tanya is finally succeeding in getting teens to listen to her warnings about the reality of teen pregnancy. “I speak at local high schools and out in the community to get this most important message out to teens: ‘Do not get pregnant. I realize it is hard with your hormones raging and it’s OK to feel like that. Just don’t act on it.’”

No matter what the reason for the pregnancy, the need continues and is growing.

Katrina Williams, a student at the University of Maryland, College Park, had a son 10 months ago. Like Tanya, she searched and searched for parenting classes, but found them either too expensive or held at a time when she couldn’t go. “Then I came across Teen Moms Friends Club on Craig’s List,” said Katrina. “After I looked at their website, I said ‘wow’ they’re doing all this for free.”

Katrina enrolled in a workshop. “What was so great about Tanya was that, even though I couldn’t meet all the time at the regularly scheduled workshop, she was flexible and met with me when I could.”

Katrina became a volunteer and a few months later was offered the position of vice president and director of operations. “Because Tanya was so dedicated to helping me, I wanted to help her,” said Katrina.

“It’s been a growing and learning experience,” said Katrina, who is now a

senior working on a criminology and criminal justice degree and hopes to be a lawyer someday.

The relatively young organization has big plans to expand into Baltimore city, throughout Maryland and eventually nationwide. They are working very hard to secure funding through grants and donations. “All the money that comes in right now gets spent on workshops and classes,” said Katrina.

Teen Moms Friends Club is now working on developing a Transitional Housing Program, which will offer affordable housing while the young single parents are finishing school or seeking stable employment. It will offer clean, sanitary housing while they get on their feet. According to Katrina, the parents will be required to attend workshops to help them in their careers and social development.

“Teen Moms Friends Club has helped me to grow so much,” said Katrina. “I started out to help myself but the more I became involved, I developed a passion for others. I grew up socially as well. The group focuses on the entire individual – mind, body and soul.”

“I love learning and I think education is so important,” said Tanya. “Let’s get them [teens] through high school and help with their career. Let’s get this next generation over that hump. This is the legacy I want to leave behind,” said Tanya.

Teen Moms Friends Club is based in Laurel, Md. For information, visit [www.teenmomsfriendsclub.org](http://www.teenmomsfriendsclub.org). Tanya is also a member of the National Association of Professional Women.



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## DivorceCare and DC4K: Finding Hope and Healing After Separation and Divorce

As told to *Single Parent 101 Magazine*

Peaceful music and a warm handshake greet members of DivorceCare when they file into the church library of Grace Baptist Church in Bowie on Thursday nights. After a long week in the battle zone known as separation and divorce, they take their seats beside others who are also looking for a respite from the storm. Their individual stories may be different but they all share a common bond – they have arrived at a difficult crossroad in their life's journey.



Welcome to DivorceCare, a faith-based recovery and support group that takes members through a 13-week video teaching session to help them heal. Each week, members tackle issues such as anger, depression, loneliness, finances and forgiveness. The groups meet in churches around the country.

This is not a counseling session – the teaching is done on the videos by leading authors, counselors, speakers and pastors with years of expertise in divorce recovery. Rather, DivorceCare is a

place where members can meet others and walk alongside each other as they travel on what can be a long and difficult road. The group leaders have themselves successfully recovered from divorce and facilitate discussion about the night's topic.

The goal? To help members face the challenges of separation and divorce and navigate through the rough time toward healing and rebuilding their lives. DivorceCare leaders caution that this is not a singles or dating club. In fact, members must sign a form promising not to date anyone in the group during the session. DivorceCare President Steve Grissom, in fact, discourages premature dating while members work through their healing to become whole again.

"I've been divorced for eight years and feel like I've come full circle," said Linda Blachly, DivorceCare leader at Grace Baptist Church. "As a leader, I want to give comfort to those going through divorce, because I know what they're going through. I also want to give them hope that life won't always be so hard."

Most people quickly feel comfortable and accepted in their

DivorceCare group. They discover there are others who share their feelings and who understand their hurt and pain.

"It is so gratifying to see the individual members evolve from week to week," said Linda. "In the beginning, we need lots of tissues. By the middle of the session, I begin to see some smiles, and by the end of the session, they have begun to implement some changes and are stronger."

"DivorceCare has helped me realize I'm not alone and that my feelings are all normal," said a recent member. "The group has really been a comfort for me," said another. "It was wonderful having the healing tied into my faith. I think I have grown a lot."

"DivorceCare has given me a weekly milestone of progress, and something to do and somewhere to turn for peer support," another member says.

And that's what it's all about.



Many DivorceCare groups also sponsor DivorceCare for Kids (DC4K) classes. DC4K is a fun environment for kids to learn how to work through the hurt of divorce. The program features videos, music, games, crafts and activities for children ages 5–12. Its mascot, Herbie, helps kids express their feelings.

Children come to DC4K excited to connect with their newfound friends. Each class is filled with

engaging activities that center around a weekly theme. These topics correlate with those discussed in the adult DivorceCare sessions.

"DC4K is an important ministry because it teaches kids that they are not alone," said DC4K safekeeper Nicky Cacciola, who leads the group alongside her husband Randy. "They learn there are other kids out there just like them. DC4K also lets them know there are people who care about them when their parent is preoccupied with all kinds of emotions and difficulties. The class teaches kids how to communicate with their parents and how to better express their feelings. Most importantly, it teaches them that God loves them and will never leave them."

Parents are grateful for the support, too. "They love it that their child can come to a class just down the hall from them and learn about the same topics, only on their own level. The kids actually keep their parent on task by making sure they don't miss a class!" said Linda.

"Although my divorce was amicable, my 10-year-old son found it difficult to deal with our separation and eventual divorce," said a parent. "In DC4K, he was able to share his feelings and concerns with other children who were going through the same experience. The group leaders are compassionate and understanding. My son loves DC4K, and many times he will reveal things in meetings that he can't share with me or his dad. When we talk about the meetings, it opens the door to new conversations about life and our relationship as a family. DC4K has been a wonderful, positive experience for my son."

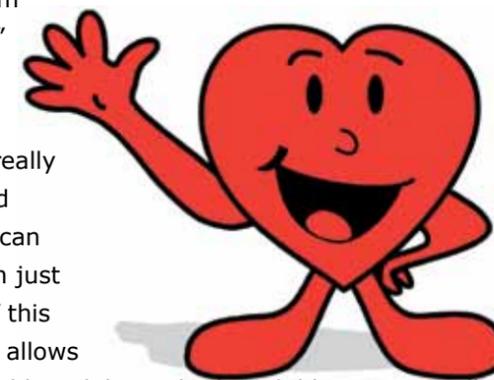
Nicky says that kids wrestle with guilt and anger as their key emotions. "Some think the divorce is their fault, others have anger issues and don't know how to express their feelings, and some hide from the sadness and hurt by acting silly or distant," said Nicky.

"They are all dealing with emotions that are adult emotions, and are trying to sort out how

to deal with them at a young age," said Randy.

According to Nicky, children really want to heal and learn, and they can learn so much in just the 13 weeks of this ministry. "DC4K allows them to be heard by adults and other children in a small group where they feel important. The ministry helps the children deal with their individual issues and helps to heal their hearts," said Nicky.

DivorceCare and DC4K are part of Church Initiatives, P.O. Box 1739, Wake Forest, NC 27588. For more information, or to find a group near you, call 800-489-7778 or visit [www.divorcecare.org](http://www.divorcecare.org) or [www.dc4k.org](http://www.dc4k.org).



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[www.joslex.com](http://www.joslex.com)

**Family Support:**

2-1-1 Maryland (Help Happens)  
www.211md.org

Big Brothers Big Sisters  
www.biglittle.com

Boys & Girls Club  
www.bgca.org

Changing Focus  
www.changingfocus.org

DivorceCare  
www.divorcecare.org

DivorceCare for Kids  
www.dc4k.org

Divorce Wisdom  
www.divorcewisdom.com

Family Health Administration (WIC program)  
www.fha.maryland.gov/wic/

Maryland Mentors  
www.marylandmentors.org

Parenting Teens Online  
www.parentingteensonline.com

Parents Empowering Families and Communities  
www.pefacpg.com

Parents Without Partners  
www.parentswithoutpartners.org

Project Joy (Play therapy)  
www.projectjoy.com

Re-Marriage Magazine  
www.remarriagemag.com

Successful Stepfamilies  
www.successfulstepfamilies.com

Teen Moms Friend's Club (prevention/education/assistance for teen moms)  
www.teenmomsfriendsclub.org

US Department of Education (grant, scholarship, financial aide and college prep guidance)  
www.ed.gov

University for Parents  
www.universityforparents.org

YMCA of Central Maryland  
www.ymaryland.org

YMCA of Metropolitan Washington  
www.ymcadc.org

YWCA Greater Baltimore Area  
www.baltimoreywca.org

**Social Support:**

Meet-Up.com – Comprised of many different interest groups. Search for your interest and location. Here are a few:

MD/VA/DC Stepmother Support Group – Bethesda, MD  
http://www.meetup.com/stepmothers/

New Beginnings Divorce Support – DC Metro - Olney, MD  
http://divorcesupport.meetup.com/360/

Old Mill School area Single Parents – Millersville, MD  
http://www.meetup.com/Single-Parents-of-Teens/

Single Parents of the Eastern Shore – Stevensville, MD  
http://www.meetup.com/Single-Parents-of-the-Eastern-Shore/

Single Parents Raising Kids – Rockville, MD  
http://singleparents.meetup.com/856/

Single Parents Social and Support Group of Central Maryland – Baltimore, MD  
http://singleparents.meetup.com/705/

**Single Parent Resource List**

The resources listed in this section are provided by Single Parent 101 Magazine solely for informational purposes. Single Parent 101 Magazine does not endorse any resources listed for products or services offered therein. In no event shall Single Parent 101 Magazine be responsible or liable, directly or indirectly, for any damage or loss caused or alleged to be caused by or in connection with the use of or reliance on any such content, goods, or services available on or through any such site or resource.

SPIN – Single Parents in Northern Virginia – Springfield, VA  
http://www.meetup.com/SPINVa/

SPOTT – Single Parents of Tweens/Teens – Rockville, MD  
http://www.meetup.com/SPOTT-DMV/

**Military Support:**

Marine Parents  
www.marineparents.com

Military Significant Other Support  
www.militarysos.com

Military.Com  
www.military.com

Navy For Moms (Look for their Single Navy Moms/Dads group)  
www.navyformoms.com

Operation Mom  
www.operationmom.org

**Single Parenting a Special Needs Child:**

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council  
www.md-council.org

Special Olympics of Maryland  
www.somd.org

The Arc of Maryland  
www.thearcmd.org

The Parents' Place of Maryland  
www.pppmd.org

Our list of resources is always growing. For the most up-to-date list, please visit our website at [www.singleparent101magazine.com](http://www.singleparent101magazine.com). Let us know what resources you are looking for. Please share with us any resources that you recommend.



You are the best...!!!  
I'm very proud of you.  
Love, Dad



To my favorite Aiden in the whole world and my favorite Brooke in the whole world.  
You are the best EVER!  
Love Mommy



Calli and Brandon you are the greatest gift that I have ever received.  
Love,  
Dad



Want to have your own special ones in Love Notes?  
Send a photo and comment for our next issue to [info@singleparent101mag.com](mailto:info@singleparent101mag.com)

Our babies at the beach Shelby, Ethan, Ryan and Maggie + we know that Taylor is shining down on us... your mom's love you

## Contributors' Biographies

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**PAULA BISACRE** - Founder of Remarriage LLC, and publisher and executive editor of reMarriage Magazine ([www.remarriagemag.com](http://www.remarriagemag.com)), which provides practical solutions for the growing remarriage community. She is a monthly columnist on remarriage in The Washington Times.

**TOBY BYRD**, Attorney at Law, is a partner at BYRD & BYRD, LLC, located at 14300 Gallant Fox Lane, Suite 120, Bowie, Md. BYRD & BYRD, LLC, is a general practice law firm with a guiding philosophy of service and excellence. The firm's attorneys enjoy the challenge of making complicated legal issues easier to understand. Mr. Byrd is a skilled practitioner in the areas of contract law, personal injury, probate and property issues. He is a Deacon at Grace Baptist Church in Bowie and is Chairman of the Board of Grace Christian School.

**LINDA CIATOLA**, M.Ed, CHES, TEP is a grandmother, health educator, certified trainer-educator-practitioner of psychodrama, group psychotherapy, and sociometry. Linda holds multiple fitness certifications, including yoga, through the American Council on Exercise. She has been practicing yoga for over 10 years and teaches yoga at Club One and Island Athletics. You may learn more at [www.healing-bridges.com](http://www.healing-bridges.com).

**STACEY GAPPERT** is a Maryland State Trooper who graduated from the Maryland State Police Academy in 1998 and currently holds the rank of Corporal. Throughout her career she has served the citizens of Queen Anne's, Anne Arundel, and Prince George's counties. A lifelong resident of Queen Anne's County, she is the mother of Bryce Hoon who attends Centreville Elementary School.

**STEVE GROSS** - Founder and director of Project Joy, a grassroots nonprofit that uses the power of play to heal and strengthen children whose lives have been deeply impacted by trauma. 323 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02115. For information, call 617-266-4569 or visit [www.projectjoy.com](http://www.projectjoy.com). You may email Steve at [steve@projectjoy.com](mailto:steve@projectjoy.com).

**ANNE GUERIN** founded Mothers' Aides as a young mother in 1979 based on a desire to see every child taken care of by qualified caregivers. In 2002, she changed the name of the agency to Staffing Solutions@ Mothers' Aides to reflect the expanded services that had been incorporated over the years. For information, call 703-250-0700 or e-mail Anne at [anneg@mystaffingsolutions.com](mailto:anneg@mystaffingsolutions.com), or visit [www.mystaffingsolutions.com](http://www.mystaffingsolutions.com)

**BETH INGHAM** - co-owner Lilac Bijoux, Annapolis, [www.lilacbijoux.com](http://www.lilacbijoux.com).

### EUGENE MCNINCH AND RYAN MAISEL DDS -



Kent Island Dentistry, 1231 Shopping Center Road, Stevensville, MD 21666. Call 410-643-5100. Dr. McNinch co-authored a children's book, Woogie the Wombat in 'The Dentist', showing kids that going to the dentist isn't so bad after all.

**SHELLIE MONROE** - President/CEO of Parents Empowering Families & Communities, a company that provides life skills seminars for adolescents to help them successfully transition into adulthood. Shellie is a professional financial speaker, trainer and consultant who enjoys helping others. "Working Together to Prepare Adolescents for Adulthood." PO Box 392, Temple Hills, MD 20757. For information, call 301-467-9708 or visit [www.pefacpg.com](http://www.pefacpg.com).

**HELEN MROSE**, MD, PhD - Former chief of Breast Imaging at Mercy Hospital in Baltimore, Chief of Breast Imaging at University of Maryland and Director of Women's Imaging at Chesapeake Medical Imaging. Dr. Mrose is now taking a personal sabbatical.

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**MIKE TIMM** - Single father of two. Lifelong food service and hospitality professional. Kent Island Catering and It's the Pits BBQ & Seafood, 226 Shopping Center Road, Stevensville, MD 21666. For information, call 410-604-1991 or e-mail Mike at [mike@itsthepitsbbqmd.com](mailto:mike@itsthepitsbbqmd.com).

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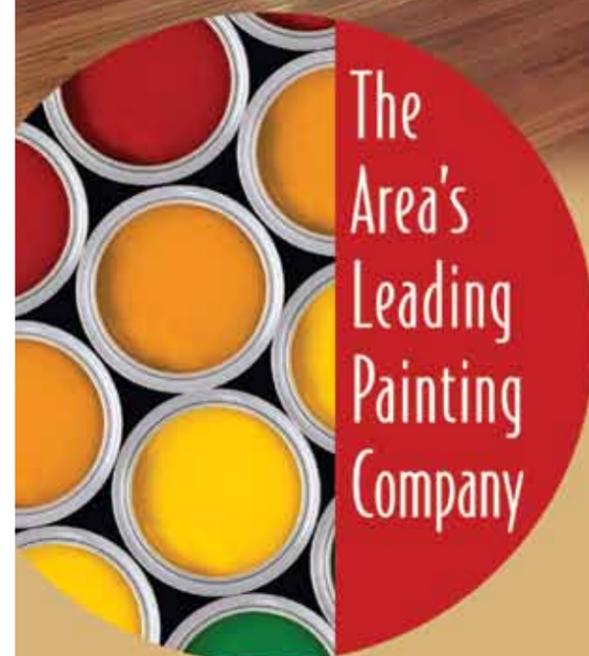
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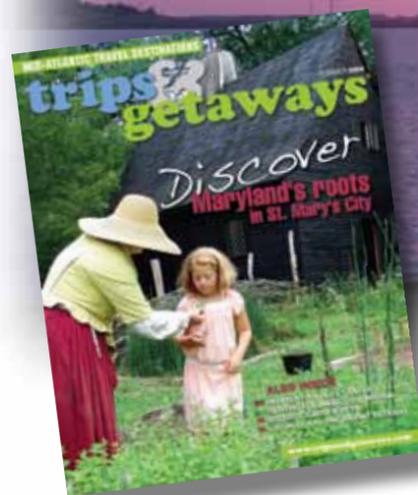
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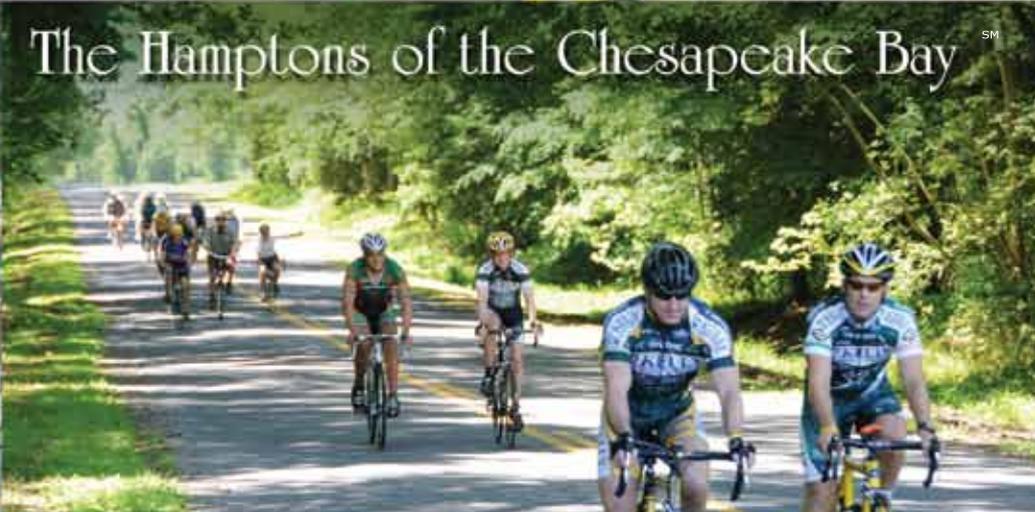
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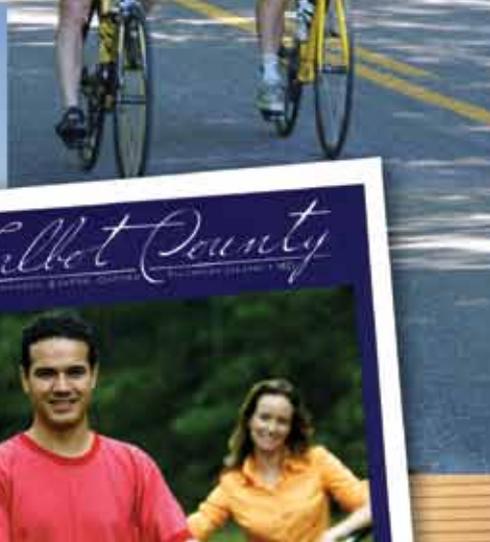
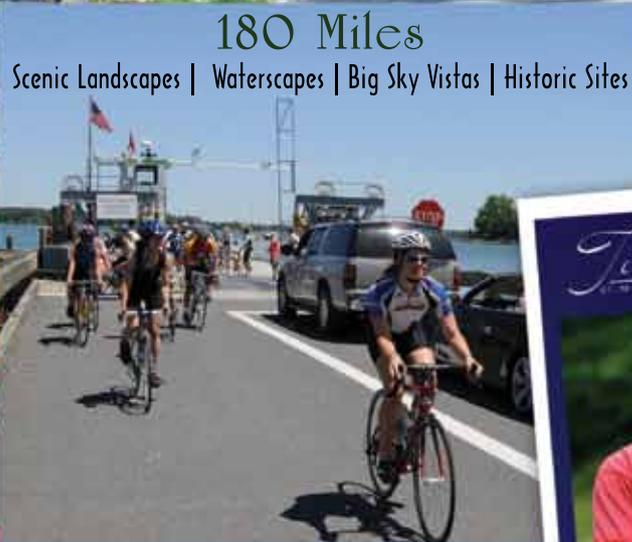


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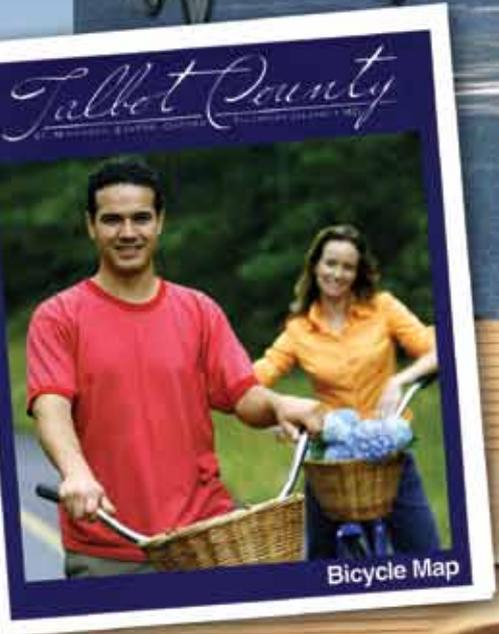
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