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Parent Times

February 2015

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President's Corner

Dear Members,

We can't believe we are more than half-way done with our year! But there are still a lot of events on the horizon, and some exciting things to note, particularly for this month.

Please join us for our:

30th Anniversary '80s Prom Fundraiser!

This event is being held Saturday, February 21st, at Phoenix Country Club. As you are aware, NCPG is a non-profit, and this event plays an important role in helping to raise money, which fuels our organization. Live music, food, fun, a fabulous silent auction, and an open bar! Not so bad, eh? '80s prom attire is encouraged, so go ahead and brush off those shoulder pads, and break out the frosted pink lipstick!

Also, join us for our next evening lecture series on Wednesday, February 25th! Our featured speaker will be discussing bullying. A great thing for moms, dads, teachers, grandparents and friends to learn about!

Please feel free to invite guests to both of these events! Just be sure to RSVP on our website.

We look forward to seeing you all a lot this February! Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions!

Sincerely,

Molly Livak & Sarah Frey

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north central parenting group

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Parent Times

Members, this monthly newsletter is for your benefit, so we want to ensure our team is publishing content that is valuable, useful, informative, and fun! Please let us know if you have suggestions, comments, concerns, or any input that would help us to improve this publication. Shoot us an email at communications@ncpgaz.org. Thanks for your help!

Editor - Kelly Vasbinder
Designer - Neill Fox, www.foxnoggin.com

On the Cover

Tessa (5) and Connor (2.5) Frey were photographed by Julie Heisey Photography. View more of Julie's work at www.julieheiseyphotography.showitsite.com



Ask the Expert

A Holistic Mom's Guide to Self-Care

by Shaly Vassigh



Moms often put their needs last and then discover that they are running on empty, and are exhausted. As a mom of two boys under the age of 6, I have had to learn the hard way about the importance of self-care. Between a family-owned business and caring for my boys, I ended up with adrenal exhaustion, which resulted in low energy and fatigue. I had to learn to prioritize my basic needs, including stress management.

The truth is that stress can hinder every aspect of our lives—our health, our relationships, and our parenting. Without taking care of yourself, how can you have the resources and energy to help others? A recent study shows that when parents are depressed or under stress, their suffering can leave a lasting mark on their children's DNA.

We NCPG members certainly don't want to see that, as I know every one aims to ensure the well-being of our little ones. But, that has to start with the well-being of us, the moms! Here are some ways that you can manage stress and keep your mind, body, and soul in balance...

☯ Massage or other spa treatments.

Ever notice how stressed you feel if your neck is tight? Or do you feel irritable if your skin is starting to show aging or look dull? Spa treatments are not just a luxury — they can help nurture you physically, mentally and emotionally.

☯ Yoga & meditation teaches how to calm the mind and learn to be present and centered in the midst of any stressful situation.

☯ **Acupuncture** helps to balance the mind and body, and it can help us sleep better, as well.

☯ **Exercise.** Exercise has been proven time and time again to have a major effect on mood. Find something you enjoy- and make some time for it.

☯ **Kids-free social outings** with your girl-friends are so important! Spend time around those that you can relate to, relax with or just plain have fun with.

☯ **Chiropractic care** helps to balance the whole body, is a preventative health care method, and relieves muscle pain/misalignment. Chiropractic care focuses on disorders of the musculoskeletal system and the nervous system, and the effects of these disorders on general health.

☯ **Healthy eating**, such as getting more greens, as well as other fruit and vegetables can help to uplift your mood by providing important vitamins and minerals. Also, getting enough Omega 3 is very important for your brain and assists in mood balancing.

☯ **Date Time.** My husband and I have started to have "Morning dates" when we have the most energy. We'll go for a hike or enjoy an inspiring lecture and brunch — something that feeds us.



And, when you need an instant stress-reliever, try this:

☯ **Breathe!** Try the 4-7-8 Breathing Technique, which is strongly encouraged by Dr. Andrew Weil. Breathe in for a count of 4, hold for a count of 7, and breathe out for a count of 8. It actually lowers blood pressure and can help you sleep. Most people that suffer from ongoing stress actually under breathe; by practice breathing a few times a day, you can breathe life into your day.

So, start a routine to take care of the most important person in your life — you! From there, the rest of your life will flourish. I promise.

Shaly Vassigh is an NCPG Board Member and a Licensed Natural Esthetician and Holistic Health Counselor. She and her husband, Dr. Goudarz Vassigh, own Back-Health Chiropractic and Inner Radiance Spa. They provide holistic treatments for the entire family.



Spa Special for NCPG Members!

Inner Radiance Spa and Back-Health Chiropractic, is offering an Organic Spa Day Package just for NCPG Moms! For \$99, our members can get a 60 minute Massage and a 60 minute Organic Facial (\$160 value). Schedule on your own, with a friend, or as a Mom's Day Out with your class! Complimentary refreshments and gift bags provided with a group of 6 or more. Call **602-956-8222** to schedule or visit www.innerradiancespa.com for spa menu and mention NCPG Mom's Package when booking. Located in the Biltmore/Arcadia area.

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Upcoming Events

NCPG 30th Anniversary "80s Prom Night" Celebration and Fundraiser

Saturday, February 21, 2015, 7-10 pm
Phoenix Country Club, 2901 N. 7th Street, Phoenix, AZ 85014
Attire: Cocktail or '80s Prom!

Join us for an evening full of food, fun, and a fabulous silent auction. This event helps fund NCPG activities, facilities, and instructors. Let's get dressed up, bring our spouses and celebrate 30 years of NCPG!



BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW! Tickets: NCPGAZ.org/prom

Here's a sneak peak at some of the NCPG Auction items:

- Stay-cations (Montelucia, l'Auberge Sedona, Four Seasons at Troon) • Disneyland park hopper tickets
- Private golf lessons • Golf rounds at Pine Canyon Flagstaff • Spa services at Bliss Spa W Hotel and Silverleaf Country Club • Dinner at El Chorro, Central Bistro, Viceroy Santa Monica • Tiffany & Co. jewelry • Private shopping with gift certificate at Calypso! **Thank you to all classes for their baskets! They are AMAZING!**

NCPG Lecture Series "Bullying — Actions & Accountability"

Wednesday, February 25, 2015
Children's Museum of Phoenix,
215 North 7th Street, Phoenix 85034

Refreshments: 6:00-6:30 pm, Lecture: 6:30-8:00 pm

Presented by Pam Baumann, Co-founder & Director of Community Education for MASK (Mothers Awareness on School-age Kids)

NCPG and Children's Museum Members are FREE
 Non-members \$10 with advance registration, \$12 at the door. All are welcome. NCPG or Children's Museum membership is not required.

Please join us for another inspiring and educational evening as we discuss the staggering rise of bullying. This program is designed to help teach your children how

their actions and reactions affect others, defining bothering versus bullying, and the power of the bystander. This lecture addresses important topics and gives parents the resources they need to communicate with and empower their children. MASK provides "teachable moments," which can enable parents to open the dialogue on tough issues with their children. A complimentary issue of MASK the Magazine will accompany the program for every attendee.

Presented by Pam Baumann, a child advocate, mentor, educator and consultant for a number of years throughout Arizona communities and various schools. She has been certified on bullying and cyber bullying by the National Institute for Trauma and the Loss of Children. In addition, Mrs. Baumann has attended training with Partnership for a Drug-Free America and has received cyber-safety training with the Arizona Attorney Generals Office and is part of the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force.

Spring NCPG Play Date

Saturday, March 21, 2015
10:00 am-12:00 pm
All Saints Episcopal School
6300 North Central Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85012

Let's have some fun with everyone in NCPG, and raise money for our partner charity, Wigged Out Inc.

Wigged Out Inc., aids cancer patients with the overwhelming stress that comes with hair loss by finding the perfect wig and hair accessories, financially and emotionally. Get ready to celebrate spring with a petting zoo, face painting, a bounce house, and much more!

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December 10
January 14

Open House Begins at 9 a.m.
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Choosing the Right Preschool for Your Child

By: Mindy Sobraske, Paradise Valley United Methodist Church Preschool Director



Selecting a preschool that is a good fit for your child can be exciting as well as overwhelming. As a parent, you want to be confident that you decide on the right program for your little one, but how do you make the best choice?

You will need to begin by doing your research. This means checking out local parenting magazines, the internet and word-of-mouth recommendations. Ask for referrals from other families and your parenting instructors. Most people would not recommend a place unless they are truly pleased with it or have in-depth knowledge and experience with the preschool.

As you start on your “preschool journey” always inquire about practical matters first. These include the preschool’s hours, proximity to your home or work, before and after-hour options, cost, class size, staff/child ratio and after school specialty programs. Be sure to ask about the application procedures and the timeline for registration. Start considering programs early and get information to make sure you do not miss any deadlines. Some programs take year round registration so the sooner you turn in an application, the sooner you will be called for placement or the higher you will be on the wait list.

When exploring your preschool options, please keep these questions and considerations in mind.

What is the educational philosophy of the preschool?
It is important to look for a preschool program which is highly child directed and **children learn through play**. The program needs to focus on the growth and development of the whole child and provide opportunities for social and emotional, language, cognitive, creative and gross and fine motor skills to grow developmentally appropriately. The children need to move around the classroom making their own choices for learning and need to be able to use their five senses on a daily bases.

The preschool’s philosophy should also involve the parents/families and should include an open door policy which means that parents are encouraged to spend time in their child’s classroom and partner with the teachers in the child’s educational process.

Remember, you are your child’s first and most important teacher!



What is the educational background and experience of the teachers and staff?

Ask about the staff’s educational qualifications and experience. Ask about the preschool’s policy on professional development, on-going education and longevity of staff. Staff should also have current CPR and Child First Aid Training.

Is the preschool accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, participating in Arizona’s First Things First or accredited by another organization?

The Academy of NAEYC is one of the top early childhood institutions where preschools who receive accreditation must meet over 400 criteria in ten standards which include: Relationships, Curriculum, Teaching, Assessment of Child Progress, Health, Teachers, Families, Community Relationships, Physical Environment and Leadership and Management. Preschools participating in Arizona’s First Things First focus on program improvement with on-going staff training and supplies/equipment provided through the grant funds.

What types of art and creative experiences does the preschool offer?

You want to be looking for a preschool where your child will have a wide variety of art materials to explore and the focus is on “process not product.” What is important is the act of doing, not the completed project.

Ask about literacy and language experiences, as well as child dictation and environmental print.

Young children need to be exposed to extensive vocabulary and books, books, books. Children need to see their spoken word in print and have opportunities for beginning reading with print found in the child’s own community/environment.

Find out how the curriculum is integrated.

In a good early childhood classroom, teachers do not separate out isolated areas of learning, but rather develop units of study or emergent projects through which the children can expand their knowledge and skills in various areas. Children are able to reach a deeper understanding of a subject when they can make connections across several disciplines. Exposure to letters, phonetic sounds, rhyming, sorting, one-to-one correspondence, set construction, odd, even, estimating and patterning should also be integrated throughout the curriculum.

The List: NCPG Beloved Preschools

NCPG members have our kids in many different preschools throughout the Valley. Here are some of the ones we wanted to send a shout out to!

- Paradise Valley United Methodist Church School — pvumcpreschool.org
- Creative Bridges — creativebridgescooperativepreschool.com
- Valley Day School at Valley Presbyterian Church — myvalleychurch.org
- Christ Church School — ccsas.org
- St. Thomas the Apostle — staphxschool.org
- Little Big Minds Spanish Immersion Preschool — littlebigmindspreschool.com
- Christ Lutheran School — cclphoenix.org
- St. Francis — school.sfxphx.org
- Sheperd of the Hills — sohpreschool.wordpress.com
- Shadow Rock — shadowrockpreschool.org
- Phoenix Country Day School — pcds.org
- Prince of Peace — poppreschool.com
- St. Theresa — stcs.us
- Tesseract — tesseractschool.org
- Arcadia Montessori — arcadiamontessori.com
- Villa Montessori — villamontessori.com
- Rainbow Montessori — rainbowmontessoriaz.com

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NCPG Mom to Meet: Kacey Raab

- Spouse:** Brian

Children: Hudson (2.5yo) and (Everlee 9mo).

Born, Raised & Lived:
I was born in Munster, IN., raised in Phoenix, AZ., and now we live in Scottsdale, AZ.

City & years married: Scottsdale, for 5 years.

Career or previous vaeer:
I was a banking analyst, and am now a full time mom.

5 words to describe yourself: Big-hearted, spacey, devoted, loving and a bit crazy.

Favorite vacation spot: Maui

Favorite children's book to read: *My Truck is Stuck*
- Favorite family hangout:** Randy's Restaurant & Ice Cream

Favorite adult spot to dine in town: Duh.... The Mission and The House Brasserie, of course! (Kacey's husband, Brian, is a founding owner of the two renowned eateries!)

Rules to mother by: Be kind to yourself, you ARE doing the best job YOU know how to.

Most meaningful mom moment: Rocking each child to bed. I'm obsessed with the smell of their clean hair.

Best mothering advice given to you: You can never kiss your kids too much!

Who introduced you to NCPG? My husband heard about it and encouraged me to join.

Best thing learned in NCPG? I am not alone.

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New Arrivals!



Crew James Worthington
October 24, 2014
6lbs, 12oz – 19.5 inches
Welcomed by Mallory, Scott, and big brother Corbett



Bradley Cole Chester
December 5, 2014
7lbs, 4oz – 20 inches
Welcomed by Kendall and Tyler



Courtland Tate Fischer
December 7, 2014
8lbs, 1oz – 21 inches
Welcomed by Pele and Nicholas



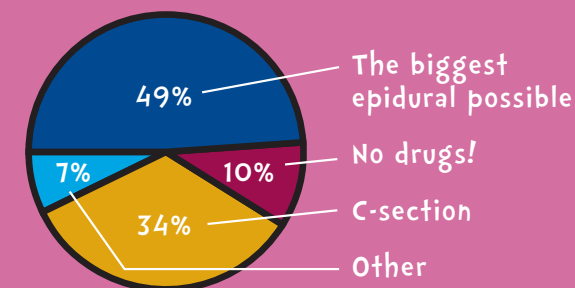
Dillon Frederick Stoney
January 15, 2015
6lbs, 10oz – 20.5 inches
Welcomed by Amy Stoney and big brother Jude (3.5)

NCPG Member Poll

Funny parenting moments!

- "At 3 months old, I called poison control when my little one peed into his mouth. Oops!"
- "A giant blow out at Olive & Ivy led to a naked baby at brunch."
- "She pooped on the floor. Our dog ate it."
- "I left my stroller in the Walgreens parking lot. But, I did have the kids in the car. Phew!"
- "Asking my son to 'put his penis away,' at the dinner table at Chelsea's Kitchen."

My labor involved:



- "I got to watch as my daughter's birth mother quietly brought her into this world and my life!"
- "No epidural, not by choice"
- "C-sections for babies #1 & 2, no drugs for baby #3!"
- "Tried home birth, but it did not work out."
- "Low level epidural, I wanted to feel a little."

Sibling Love



How to Teach our Children to be Good Friends!

By: Pam Hudgins, MSW, LCSW
Counselor, Saint Thomas the Apostle School

Friendships are more than just play dates and classmates; they are a vital part of a child's social development. Friendships bring with them many gifts, emotions, and lessons in this ever increasingly social world!

Children hold different capacities for friendships at different ages and help develop a child's sense of self and confidence. For three to seven year olds, friendships are about proximity, learning to share, practicing how to resolve conflict and forming affection for others



outside of their family. As children get older, between the ages of seven and twelve, friendships become about shared interests and often define friends as children who do nice things for them.

Compromise signals a new level of maturity. A child's adolescent friendships are distinguished by the level of disclosure that begins the process of distinguishing between friends and acquaintances. More so at this age, children define themselves by their social relationships and comparing themselves to others.

When interacting with friends, children will learn how to cooperate and communicate while working together to make group decisions and solve problems. Friendship also involves taking risks and being willing to take the initiative in reaching out to others. Modeling how to

be a good friend is an important way we can help our children take those risks and enjoy healthy friendships.



Encourage your child to include others in play: "What job can Emma have?" or "There is always room for one more friend on the slide." If your child feels excluded, he is probably not the only one. Have them start a new group or activity. Ask them to reach out to someone sitting alone and go over and sit with the child. Encourage your child to warm and friendly and suggest that they ask questions: what are their favorite television shows or do they have a pet.



When your child is having a difficult time with friendships, find other activities and interests for them to succeed in and to meet other children. As your child is learning to be a good friend –don't worry! Preschool aged children often shift between friends.



Finally, it is important to note that while none of us want to be rejected, not everyone will accept a friend request. Teach your children that it is O.K. and that long lasting and wonderful friendships can and do occur and when they do, the effort put into it is truly worth it.

Valentine Craft

Homemade Valentine's Day Cards: Melted Crayon Hearts

by Mellisa Swigart — MomLuck.com

My kids love to color and over the years we have collected quite a collection of crayons. In fact both of my kids have containers full of crayons in just about every color you can think of. Having so many crayons creates a lot of clutter so I decided to take some of these crayons and make melted crayon hearts with my kids.

This past weekend we made Melted Crayon hearts out of about 100 or so old and broken crayons. It's super easy to do and doesn't cost much money at all. This craft can be done anytime of the year and you can use any type of mold that you like. Molds can be found at places like Walmart, Target, Hobby Lobby, Etc. Since we were making these for Valentine's Day I chose to do a heart crayon. I picked up the mold below at Walmart for around \$3.

Directions for Melted Crayon Hearts

1. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees.
2. Unwrap your crayons, making sure you get all of the paper off. If your making a solid color crayon separate your colors into piles. If not you can just make one big pile.
3. Next break or cut the crayons into small pieces. The smaller the pieces the quicker they will melt.
4. Now place these crayons into the mold and fill up about 3/4, depending on how big of crayon you want. My mold was pretty big so we only filled it up 1/2 way.
5. Bake these crayons in the oven at 250 degrees for about 20 minutes.
6. After they are done, take them out of the oven and let cool completely before attempting to take them out of the molds. If you take them out too soon, they will break.

To make these Melted Crayon Hearts even better we turned them into Valentine's Day Cards for all of Aubrey's friends at Pre-school. I just took a few pieces of construction paper cut them in a small square. Hot glued the crayon to the center of the card and we wrote "You Color My World". Very cute and very simple!



Chili Lime Chicken Burgers

by Danielle Walker — AgainstAllGrain.com

INGREDIENTS:

For The Patties

- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1/4 cup red onions, chopped
- 1/4 cup red bell peppers, chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

For the Assembly

- 1 recipe for Grain-Free Crusty Dinner Rolls
- 1 cup fresh guacamole
- 4 pieces romaine lettuce
- 1 tomato, sliced
- 2 tablespoons homemade mayonnaise
- 4 slices raw grassfed pepper jack cheese (omit for Paleo)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Saute the onions, bell peppers, and garlic in a little olive oil over medium heat. Cook them for 10 minutes, or until they're soft.

Place the chicken, onion mix, cilantro, salt, lime juice, and red pepper flakes in a bowl.

Mix with your hands until combined. Divide the meat into 4, then shape into 4 patties.

Grill for about 6 minutes on each side, or until the internal temperature registers 175 degrees.

Toast the rolls, then pile high with any toppings your heart desires!



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