

Parent Times

April 2019



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President's Corner

To the NCPG Community,

HAPPY APRIL!! I hope everyone had a great spring break, and maybe even enjoyed a spring training game or two! I cannot believe how quickly this year has flown by!

With that being said, April is the last full month I am serving as NCPG President. It has been such an honor and joy working alongside such amazing moms (and total boss ladies!!!) on the Board this year. I am so grateful for such a fun opportunity to lead such a special organization. I am so excited to see what next year brings, as I hand over the gavel to my friend and amazing leader, **Megan Garvey!** NCPG is so lucky to have such an amazing Board for the 2019-2020 year!

We still have today's class and two more left (April 24th and May 8th). Take advantage of all the parenting tools, advice and support you will gain in these last few classes before the summer!

Finally, registration for the 2019-2020 year has officially OPENED and you need to register IN APRIL for the early-bird discount! Classes are being filled on a first-come-first-serve basis, so register now to get your spot for next year! We had several classes with waiting lists this year and always do our best to prioritize existing members. We have another great year in store with our amazing and knowledgeable teachers as well as a fun social calendar!

Thank you for such a great year, and let's enjoy these last few classes! Please always feel free to reach out to me with any suggestions or ideas about improving NCPG!

XO,

Stacy Medeiros
NCPG Board President
president@ncpgaz.org

The information provided by NCPG instructors should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.



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north central parenting group



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NCPG is a non-profit, non-denominational organization providing classes to parents of infant to elementary school aged children.

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Parent Times

Members, this monthly magazine 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!

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Member to Meet

Brittney Collins



Kid's Name, Ages and Current Class: Leighton - 4.5 years old and Grant - 2 years old, Class 4B

Career or previous career: Prior to moving to Arizona, I worked in medical device sales where I sold products used in spine surgery. I'm thankful for that career because it introduced me to my hubby!

Favorite family vacation spot? I grew up going to a place that southerners call "30A". It's the highway that runs along the Florida panhandle and includes all of the cute beach towns along the way. The sand is soft and white and the water is warm and crystal clear. It is so family friendly! My personal favorites are Seaside and Rosemary Beach.

Favorite family spot to dine in town? Any spot that is loud! Our go-to's are LGO, Ingo's, Doughbird or Barrio Queen.

Where were you born and raised? I grew up in a small southern Louisiana town named Westlake. Population around 4,000 people! Most of the residents of the city worked at one of the many petroleum plants in town. We had zero restaurants – only fast food chains, and only one main road. Needless to say, I was happy to leave!

When you have 30 minutes of free time what do you do? I either take a power nap or watch one of my favorite TV shows. I have the same television taste of a teenager. My current favs are The Challenge and Riverdale. Don't knock it till you try it!

What story does your family always tell about you? My family loves to talk about my short stint on reality television. In 2003, I was on an episode of Fear Factor and I actually won! I had to eat fermented squid guts and ride on the back of a tanker trunk to win the \$50,000. It was a really fun and surreal experience!

What's your favorite thing to do with your child/children? We love to dance around in the kitchen as a family. I always have music on at our house and the kids love it. They like to do silly dances and have us imitate them. They are currently obsessed with "Shut up and dance" by Walk the Moon and want to listen to it on repeat!

Most "OMG did that really happen" moment as a parent? This past summer, we traveled to Denver to visit my husband's family. After a series of flight cancellations, I sent my husband ahead of me to return to Phoenix for work. I was certain I could handle two kids alone on a flight. After misreading the date of the flight and waiting in the airport for 8 hours and not getting off the standby list, I was that person hysterically crying in the middle of the airport while my kids ran around screaming. It was one of my worst moments as a Mom and I'm still recovering!

What is your favorite family tradition? Ever since I was a child, my siblings and I would watch "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" on Christmas Eve. We would all sleep in the same room in sleeping bags. Even while I was in college and well past believing in Santa, we continued this tradition. I've started this tradition with our kids, and every Christmas Eve we sit together as a family in our Grinch PJs and watch the movie!

Best parenting advice given to you? To always respond to your children with love and grace. When I'm feeling stressed or overwhelmed with them, I always remind myself of that. Sometimes this requires some deep breathing or a quick mommy time out, but I ultimately try to react with love. When I fail to do so, I always apologize and ask for forgiveness.

How do you balance meeting your children's needs as well as your own? I am a big advocate of self-care. I frequently work out or play tennis to relieve stress. I also love date nights with my husband and have a weekly babysitter so that I can run errands. I find that if I have a little time to be alone and decompress, I am a much calmer and happier momma and better equipped to meet their needs.

Who introduced you to NCPG and for how many years have you been a part of the group? I actually saw a flyer for NCPG at the Camelback Village one summer. I was looking for a way to meet more mommas and decided to join! I'm so glad I did and wish I would have joined when I was pregnant with my first child. This is my 3rd year with NCPG!

Best thing learned in NCPG? I have learned so many valuable and helpful lessons and tips throughout my time at NCPG, but to me, the most valuable has been the realization that we all are going through the same thing. Sometimes motherhood can feel lonely and isolating, so knowing that I have other strong women in it with me, makes it seem a bit easier. I also constantly remind myself of Barb's advice to be Jesus, Buddha, and the Dalai Lama in the midst of chaos.

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- **Ages 2.5-4** - 1:00-1:45pm: \$14 per class
- **Ages 3.5-5** - 1:45-2:30pm: \$14 per class

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2019 Spring Calendar

Class Schedule

8:30 am Nursery opens
9:00-9:40 am Refreshments served
9:45*-11:30 am Classes are held
**Teachers will start promptly at 9:45!*
11:45 am Nursery closes
11:30 - 1:15 pm Pre-Infant Class

Location

Saint Barnabas on the Desert Episcopal Church
6715 N. Mockingbird Lane
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Class Dates

April 24
May 8**
***Parent Times magazine distributed.*

Board Meeting Schedule

May 6



Board Announcements

Treasury

NCPG continues to offer scholarship opportunities for both membership and nursery dues. For more information, please contact treasurer@ncpgaz.org

Sponsorship

If you know of a business that might be interested in being an NCPG sponsor or advertiser, please let us know! Email us at sponsorship@ncpgaz.org

Childcare

NCPG is happy to continue offering onsite childcare to our members for children 6 months to 5 years old from 8:30 am-11:45 am on class days. Newborns ages 0-6 months may attend class with their parent. In order to take advantage members must first register their children through our website ncpgaz.org. Detailed instructions on how to register can be found under the Childcare tab. Space is limited so be sure to book your spot when the sign up opens at 8am the morning after Wednesday classes. The childcare login can be found under the Childcare tab on the website. First child is \$35, each additional Child is \$15.

Email us at childcare@ncpgaz.org with any questions.



Public Relations

Please continue to use the NCPG Members Only Facebook Group to ask questions, share advice, local events and deals, and to buy and sell. We just ask that we keep everything respectful and positive on the page. Please request to join the group and you will be approved.



Early Bird Membership!!

Early Bird Registration for returning members will begin on April 1st online at ncpgaz.org. A discounted rate of \$250 will be offered for returning members for the month of April, with the regular rate of \$300 for any registrations received after May 1st. Mark your calendar and register early online at ncpgaz.org so we can guarantee your placement for 2019-2020.

Also, we're continuing to offer **one-time class trial visits** throughout the end of the year. Please email membership@ncpgaz.org for details.

We Want Your Pictures!

Next month's photo spread for Parent Times will be pictures of Spring Time Fun!



Send us your photos from your spring breaks so we can show how much fun we all had!

Please send all birth announcements, snapshots of NCPG kids and parents, and professional photos to be considered for the front cover to communications@ncpgaz.org.

Education: CLASSROOM NORMS

Be Respectful:

Be respectful to yourself, others and the learning environment. This includes keeping cell phone use to a minimum and having no food or drinks in the classroom (water is allowed).

Be Kind:

NCPG is a community where parents support one another. Remember to disagree lovingly so it is a safe environment for all.

Be Responsible:

Teachers are responsible to create data driven, research-based lessons. All members are responsible for confidentiality within the classroom. NCPG believes in a safe environment where members feel free to share openly and honestly.



Special Event



NCPG SPRING FESTIVAL!

Saturday, April 13th
10:00 am-12 noon

All Saints Episcopal Day School

The most popular event of the year is back with even more activities and attractions! Join us for a morning of fun:

- Bounce House
- Obstacle Course
- Face Painting
- Petting Zoo
- Special Guest "Jungle Jill" will also be joining us for an interactive animal show featuring a variety of exotic animals!
- **Tacos El Buen Gusto** will be onsite with delicious tacos, freshly made burgers, and hot dogs available for purchase.
- **Mama's Cold Brew** will be on hand to meet your coffee needs!
- And MUCH MUCH MORE

You won't want to miss this event!





HOW TO MAKE GROCERY SHOPPING MORE FUN WITH KIDS

By Sheila Wray Gregoire
To Love, Honor, & Vacuum

It's the task you've been dreading all week!

You've got a bunch of kids in the minivan, a grocery list that's a mile long, and you wonder if you'll manage to get in and out of the store without someone screaming or throwing something.

Grocery shopping with kids can be an ordeal. But maybe we just need to think about it differently!

After all, if you consider grocery shopping from a child's point of view, it's pretty boring. They're stuck in a grocery cart and can't move very much. There's nothing to do. They're surrounded by food they can't eat. And so they get bored and grumpy and start acting out. What's the solution?

Keep kids engaged, and they just may find that grocery shopping can be fun! And by keeping kids engaged, you make it go faster for you, too.

My first line of attack when grocery shopping was to grab a banana or a dried fruit snack for each child and head to the express check out line. Then the kids would have something to eat while we shopped to stop the natural "gimme gimmes" that would start when surrounded by so much food. I'd stick the receipt in my pocket in case a staff member questioned me. (Bringing food from home is a bad idea; the staff may not believe

that you didn't pick it up there).

The rest of the plan is age-based. Here's what to do to engage kids while grocery shopping:

Make Grocery Shopping with Kids More Fun For Everyone (Even You) Engaging Babies: Keep Talking!

No matter what you're doing, keep up a running commentary. "Mommy's choosing grapes. See the grapes? Yummy!" All through the store, talk and make eye contact.

Babies may not understand what you're saying, but they know you're talking to them. Sure, shoppers may look at you strangely, but your baby knows you care.

Engaging Toddlers: Play the Color Game

As you walk through the aisles, ask your kids to find things that are certain colors. What's orange? Oranges are orange! Peppers are orange! The container of sherbet is orange!

Take it one step further and count how many things are orange, so they learn numbers, too. You can even assign one child orange and one child green, and see who gets more items by the end of the trip

Engaging Preschoolers: Play the Letter Game

After colors and numbers you can graduate to letters. How many groceries can we find that begin with the letter "P"? Peppers! Pineapple! Popcorn!

Ask them to scan the shelves for things starting with the "P" sound, even if you're not buying it. You can even pick up a loaf of bread and ask them, "Does this begin with P?", because B and P are awfully close.

And then all the way home, ask them to scan for things starting with P.

Next time out: graduate to D, or M, or O.

Engaging Elementary School Kids: Name Food Groups and Play Math

Move on to more challenging puzzles. You can identify food groups—is this a vegetable or dairy? And you can even teach them to be wise shoppers — is this a whole food? Is this a "yes" food or a "no" food?

If your kids are picky eaters, this can help with that problem, too, because you can have them choose some "yes" foods that are healthy that they'll also agree to eat. If they get to choose, they're more likely to eat it.

Then bring math into the picture. How much do you think our grocery bill will be? As you shop, round everything to the nearest dollar and have them keep track. You'll have to guess at things you pay for by weight.

As they get older, round to the nearest fifty cents. This helps them learn to add numbers in their head, but it also helps them understand which groceries are expensive, and which ones are relatively cheap.

Once kids reach 9 or 10 you can even send them for some groceries on their own (or in pairs). Assign two children to go and get the milk and bring it back to you.

Engaging Kids While Shopping Works!

Usually when small children are screaming in the grocery store, they're simply bored. And often we moms are so focused on getting through this awful task as quickly as possible that we tend to bark orders or even yell at our kids—"sit still!" "No, we can't buy that!" "Don't touch your sister!" You're exhausted, the kids are frustrated, and everyone hates grocery shopping.

But if you try one of these techniques, you'll likely find kids get far less bored—and they'll learn a lot in the process, too.


Best of all, by the time they're teenagers they will have been paying attention so much to what foods you were buying and why you chose certain things over others that you'll be able to send them to do the shopping for you. So put in the work now—and everyone will benefit.

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Turn Your Weekends into Mini-Vacations

You don't need to leave town to think about your days of rest in a way that sends you back to work on Monday a happier person.

By Sue Shellenbarger, wsj.com



PHOTO BY XAVIER MOUTON PHOTOGRAPHIE ON UNSPLASH

There's a reason most people return to work Monday feeling no better than they did Friday afternoon.

Fatigue and stress on the job are problems for two out of three workers, and weekends usually aren't much help, studies show.

New research suggests a surprisingly simple solution: Pretend your weekend is a vacation.

People instructed to adopt a vacation mind-set on the weekend returned to work feeling happier and more refreshed, without spending any additional money or time off, according to research on nearly 1,000 full-time workers at the University of California, Los Angeles. Although participants spent a little more time on eating and intimacy with loved ones, researchers found after controlling the results for specific behaviors that just one factor — their increased focus on the present moment, or mindfulness — predicted greater happiness.

"Merely shifting how you're thinking can have these wonderful effects on your emotional experience and your time," says Cassie Mogilner Holmes, a researcher on the project, which was described in January in the Harvard

Business Review. Dr. Mogilner Holmes is an associate professor of marketing at UCLA's Anderson School of Management and a leading researcher on happiness.

This doesn't always require changing your normal weekend routine. It may mean just thinking about and prioritizing activities differently. Interviews with a dozen people who consciously cultivate mindfulness on the weekend offer insights into the time-management and planning skills they employ.

Phil Risher knows the mood he wants—the joy he gets from adventure travel. He can sometimes achieve that in a weekend by planning ahead. Mr. Risher, a business-development director, keeps a list of hikes and scenic parks less than an hour's drive from his Montgomery Village, Md., home.

When Saturday comes, he and his fiancée, Ashley Parrales, don't have to spend any time figuring out what to do. They just get in their car and go. "If I fill my time with something that's exhilarating and makes me feel like I accomplished something, then I really do feel like I'm on a vacation," says Mr. Risher, who blogs on young adults' financial issues.

La'Wana Harris sets aside household chores and to-do lists on weekends to focus on her Wake Forest, N.C., home and her family.

A Friday ritual marks the end of the workweek—a special family dinner and movie night, no social media allowed, with her husband, two adult children and grandson, who live with her. Ms. Harris makes time Saturday to play in her backyard with her 4-year-old grandson, Jaden, gardening and exploring. "We listen to the birds, we play in the dirt. If it's raining, we splash in the puddles," says Ms. Harris, a former pharmaceutical executive and author of a forthcoming book on improving workplace diversity.

She wards off family members' requests to do errands or other tasks on Sundays, reserving it for church and leisure. "I'll say, 'Hmmm, nope. It's still Sunday. I'm not leaving Sunday until I have to,' " she says.

Of course, few people can avoid chores every weekend. Dr. Mogilner Holmes of UCLA says embracing a vacation mind-set every weekend wouldn't work anyway, because it would become just another routine.

Instead, many weekend vacationers manage to remain mindful while doing the usual things.

Psychotherapist Yael Katzman consciously sheds thoughts of work as she exits her Encino, Calif., office on Fridays. "I envision all the week's stressors getting left behind," she says.

Rather than the usual cereal and milk for Saturday breakfast, she invents dishes for her husband, Maor, and their daughters, 5 and 2, savoring the colors, flavor and texture of the food. She recently grilled thin-sliced sweet potatoes and topped them with an egg, turkey and



PHOTO BY JOHN-MARK SMITH ON UNSPLASH

avocado—like an open-face sandwich, Ms. Katzman says.

Her daughters often play dress-up, perform a play for her and her husband or make up games. “I love to just turn music on and be silly and dance,” Ms. Katzman says. “I try to spend the weekend laughing.”

Mindfulness has been shown in research to improve self-control, helping people regulate their emotions. Those who enjoy vacations tend to revel in positive emotions, expanding feelings of joy or happiness, according to a 2018 study of 42 vacationers.

It takes some people a few days after stopping work to wind down to that relaxed state.

Gato Scatena speeds up the process by jolting his body into weekend mode. During the week he takes invigorating cold showers in the morning, hits the gym early and fasts until lunch.

“Everything I do on weekends, when I know I need to unwind, is the polar opposite,” he says. He enjoys a warm shower and makes a leisurely breakfast of sourdough toast and a poached egg, sometimes with Hollandaise sauce. Then he goes on a hike with his fiancée, Paloma Rush, or chills at home, reading. “I just completely go

into vacation mode,” says Mr. Scatena, managing director of S&R Films, a Los Angeles film production company.

Still, preoccupation with work is hard to shake. Some three out of five adults can’t keep their minds off work even when they’re doing something else, according to a 2017 survey of 1,000 adults.

When Victoria Bogner’s work as CEO of a Lawrence, Kan., financial-planning firm started spilling into weekends, her husband, Luke, urged her to set boundaries. She started planning for the week ahead on Thursday, to wrap up tasks that might otherwise intrude on her thinking.

On Friday evening, she turns off email, sets her phone aside, zips her laptop case and stashes it behind some boxes at the back of a closet, where it stays for the weekend. If a work issue pops into her head, she writes it down in a small notebook she carries and purges it from her brain.

This frees her mentally to immerse herself in play and outings with Luke and their two children, Evelyn, 5, and Max, 3. “When those relationships flourish, you feel that refreshment, joy and true peace that comes with being present in the moment with your family,” she says.

To Turn Your Weekend Into a Vacation:

- Finish your Monday to-do list by Friday evening and set it aside.
- Engage in new, refreshing pursuits you can’t do during the week.
- Revel in happy moments and make them last.
- Notice and savor the sights, smells and sounds around you.
- Strike a balance between invigorating activities and relaxation.
- If negative thoughts intrude, let them go.

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Beat-the-Heat Recipes for Mom's with New Babies!

(Sources: Parents.com & Eatgood4life.com)

Nursing moms who struggle with low milk production will do pretty much just about anything to help increase their milk supply. Fortunately, there are several things you can do, snacks and cookies you can eat, teas you can drink, and smoothies you can make to ramp things up. The ingredients inside these snacks, teas and smoothies are considered milk-boosters. Some of those ingredients are fenugreek, brewer's yeast, oats, and nuts. Spinach and flax contain phytoestrogens which are thought to promote lactation, as well. What's great about smoothies is that you can combine several of these milk-boosting foods quickly together. It's also an easy and fast way to get several of these ingredients in your system.



PB&J Lactation Smoothie

- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1/2 banana, frozen
- 1/3 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- 2 tsp ground flaxseeds
- 2 tbsp creamy peanut butter

Directions: First add the milk in the blender followed by the rest of the ingredients. Cover and blend on high until smooth. Stop and scrap the sides as needed.



Very Berry Lactation Smoothie

- 2/3 cup fresh or frozen berries
- 1/2 cup yogurt (use greek yogurt for extra protein)
- 1 cup milk of choice
- 1/3 cup rolled oats
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseed or wheat germ
- 1 tbsp honey or sweetener of choice (try agave – so good!)
- 1 tsp Brewer's Yeast

Directions: First, blend together the berries, yogurt and milk. (Add milk to the blender first.) Then, add in the oats, flaxseed/wheat germ, sweetener, and brewer's yeast and blend again until smooth. (This will take a while to get smooth with all of the oats.)



Dark Chocolate, Peanut Butter and Banana Lactation Smoothie

- 3 cups almond milk
- 2-3 frozen bananas, chopped
- 1 tbsp unsweetened dark cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1 tbsp raw cacao nibs (optional)
- 1/4 cup flaxseed meal
- 2-3 tbsp organic peanut butter

Directions: In a blender, add the chocolate chips, cocoa nibs, cocoa powder, peanut butter and 1 cup almond milk. Blend for about 30 seconds. Add other remaining ingredients and blend until smooth.



Blueberry Pancake Lactation Smoothie

Craving some yummy pancakes but want fewer calories that will still increase your milk? Try this scrumptious calcium and protein-rich smoothie. And for a pretty pink twist use raspberries instead of the blueberries.

- 1 cup reduced-fat milk
- 2/3 cup reduced-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 1 1/4 cup frozen blueberries
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tbs pure maple syrup

Directions: Add all of the ingredients to the blender, starting with the milk. Cover and blend on high until smooth, stopping and scraping the sides as needed.

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CRAFT: How to Make Easy Dyed Easter Eggs

- First off, if you use a muffin tin, it makes this REALLY easy! Load up each hole with shaving cream or cool whip. Add a few drops of gel food coloring to each hole. (I did 2 colors in each one.)
- Then, using a toothpick, lightly swirl the color around. You don't want to mix it up too much otherwise you won't have a big color contrast on your eggs!



- Next up, place the hard boiled eggs into each hole and lightly press down!
- Leave the eggs here for about 10 minutes and then flip them over!



- Leave the eggs for 10 more minutes on the opposite side.
- Remove the eggs from the tins, then lightly rinse them off. Set them on a paper towel or kitchen towel to dry.

Do you know someone in our organization that could use a little helping hand?



These are just a few examples of the issues we deal with each and every day, and there are so many more!

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If you know someone who could use a hand, please send nominations to outreach@ncpgaz.org or stop by the submission box that can be found near the breakfast table and nominate anonymously.

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