

# Parent Times

Sept/Oct 2022



ncpg  
north central parenting group  
learn · connect · inspire



**Built on our history**

**Designed for their future**



**Cultivating the next generation of leaders and thinkers in an atmosphere designed to instill confidence, independence, and character.**

**[allsaints.org/learn-more](https://allsaints.org/learn-more)**



**FINANCIAL ADVICE FOR**

**PRACTICAL PEOPLE**





**(602)-412-1666**  
[info@lifemanaged.com](mailto:info@lifemanaged.com)  
 [@lifemanaged\\_](https://www.instagram.com/lifemanaged_)



**President's Corner**

## Welcome Back NCPG Mamas!

I couldn't be more excited to kick off our 2022-2023 year and am truly honored to be your president. Our current board is made up of 26 incredible women who have been hard at work all summer planning for an incredible year back at our pre-COVID location of Saint Barnabas on the Desert! To our returning members, we know the last few years have been challenging, and that NCPG has looked different from the organization that many of us have known and loved for many years. I am committed to coming back this year better than ever with the word "community" at the center of everything we do. While I am incredibly proud of the quality education that NCPG has maintained since the start of the pandemic, I am well aware that the sense of community has been missing for some. My #1 goal for this year is that all our members, both returning and new, will not only learn from our wonderful teachers, but that they will also feel a part of something truly special...our amazing community of NCPG moms.

Now to share a little bit about myself with all of you. I am originally from the East Coast, but moved to Arizona when I was 5, so I consider myself an "almost" native. My husband, Drew, and I have a full house with two kids and two dogs. My daughter, Kate, will be 5 in February and my son, Oliver, will be 3 in December. I joined NCPG when I was pregnant with my oldest and this will be my 6th year in the organization. I joined the board in 2019 and served on Membership for two years before moving over to VP last year and President this year. In addition to being a mom and serving on the board, I also work full time as a mental health counselor and have a private practice in the Arcadia area where I treat adolescents and young adults with eating disorders. My career is my passion and I feel so fortunate to have a job that brings so much joy and fulfillment to my life.

I have said it before, but I want to thank you again for your commitment to NCPG and your openness and flexibility as we navigated the last 2 1/2 years. I can't wait to see you all at the fun events that we have planned this year, including our **Zoo Play Date on September 25th!** As always, please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, concerns, thoughts, suggestions, or anything else you may want to share. I can be reached at [president@ncpgaz.org](mailto:president@ncpgaz.org) or **480-695-7417**.

Sincerely,

**Ilyssa Reading**  
[president@ncpgaz.org](mailto: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.



north central parenting group



## 2022-2023 Board of Directors

**President:** Ilyssa Reading  
**Vice President:** Jenna Roehm  
**Treasurer:** Aarika Gaona  
**Executive Assistant:** Jen Dupuy  
**Sponsorship Directors:** Naomi Bentley, Brooke Dahn & Mary Patterson  
**Transitional Director:** Megan Hedstrom  
**Public Relations Director:** Delia Prucz  
**Special Events Directors:** Ashlee Merrill, Sara Ortega & Lauren Siddall  
**Social Directors:** Brittany Beatty & Cristin Salzman  
**Outreach Directors:** Whitney Emmerson & Rachel Hall  
**Communications Directors:** Catherine Jacobson & Amanda Shaw  
**Childcare Directors:** Alana Hildebrand & Alicia Schroeder  
**Membership Directors:** Alexis Smith & Michelle Van Der Werf  
**Education Directors:** Meredith Marks & Jennifer Marusiak  
**Fundraising Directors:** Amy Dillon & Jill McMeekin

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

[www.ncpgaz.org](http://www.ncpgaz.org)  Like us on Facebook: [ncpgaz](https://www.facebook.com/ncpgaz)

## 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](mailto:communications@ncpgaz.org). Thanks for your help!

**Editors** – Catherine Jacobson & Amanda Shaw  
**Designer** – Neill Fox, [foxnoggin.com](http://foxnoggin.com), [neill@foxnoggin.com](https://www.instagram.com/foxnoggin)

**Front Cover** – Member: Alicia Schroeder. Daughter: Vale 3.5 years  
**Photo** – Caroline Haugen Photography  
 (IG: [@carolinehaugenphotography](https://www.instagram.com/carolinehaugenphotography))



# Member to Meet

## Lisa Klarich, 2A

**Child:** Payton, 18 months

**Spouse:** Justin Klarich

**Hometown:** Napavine, a small town in Washington State

**Career or former career:** Event producer - Experiential marketing, incentive trips

**Favorite date night spot:** Date spot? We just survived year one! We like to mix it up... sushi, Sicilian Butcher, SOL

**Favorite local family spot to dine:** We love breakfast! The three of us go to Butters every Thursday morning.

**Favorite place to vacation with the family:** Telluride – summer or winter we love it!

**How do you balance meeting your children’s needs as well as your own:** I am pretty sure I am still figuring this one out. One thing that has helped is creating a schedule that has some ‘me’ stuff in it. This has really helped ensure I am doing things that refresh and reenergize me since it is already part of the plan. Another thing is trying to do some stuff with my daughter – she now does yoga with me each morning. This entertains her and I get some movement in, it is a win, win.

**Favorite local place to take your children for fun:** We have been escaping the heat to Greer, Arizona quite a bit this summer and exploring nature with her has been SO much fun.

**Best advice for traveling with kids:** Lots of snacks, lots of toys – we hook a Bose speaker by her car seat, so her music (sleeping or fun) is close to her and quieter for us.

**How do you simplify your morning routine with kids:** I’ll have to read the tips from other members for this one. Since I’m not working full time and she is still home our mornings aren’t too hectic yet. That said, we go for long walks each morning so I meal prep breakfast (pre-made egg sandwiches, egg bites, overnight oats, etc.) making breakfast quick and easy.

**Most meaningful moment as a parent:** That is tough, I feel like there has been so many this first year and half. I think it is seeing her become more and more independent. Her accomplishing or doing something and that beautiful, prideful smile she gets. I love seeing it.

**Most “OMG did that really happen” moment as a parent:** My daughter has always loved her baths and enjoyed a few dips in the pool last summer when she was 4/5 months old, however we have not done any swimming lessons. By her second time in the pool this summer she was jumping off the edge, going fully underwater, and coming up with a big smile on her face. My husband and I both looked at each other like, “did that just happen?!”. She has been a little fish ever since.

**Best parenting advice given to you:** When growing up my mom had a framed poem on the wall that read:

“Cleaning and scrubbing can wait ‘til tomorrow,  
for babies grow up we’ve learned in our sorrow.  
So quiet down cobwebs and dust go to sleep;  
I’m rocking my baby and babies don’t keep.”

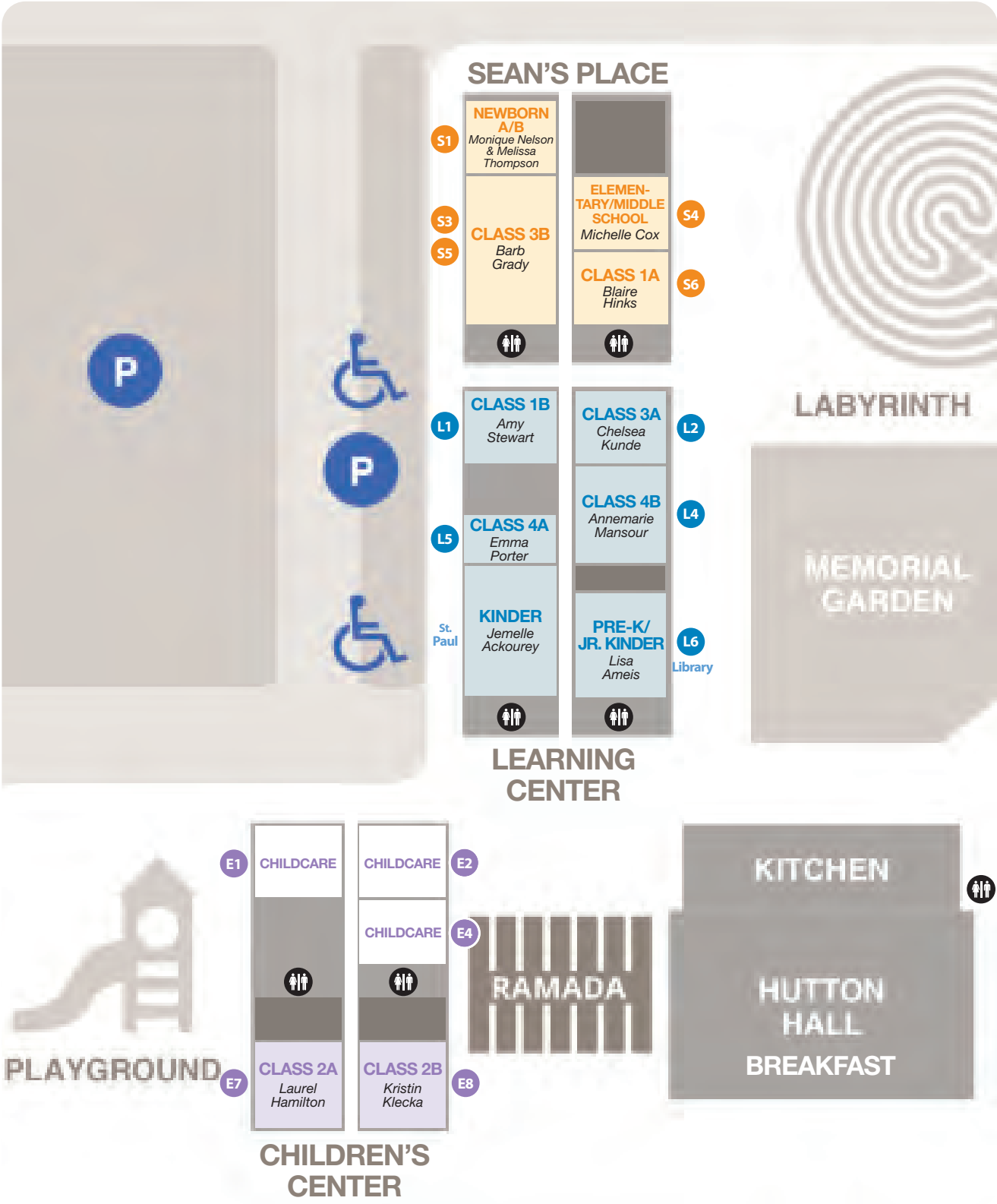
I think that was really ingrained in me and has helped me keep perspective about what is important. Another tip I have really taken to heart is to let them be young.

**How were you introduced to NCPG and how many years have you been a part of the group:** Meredith Marks said let’s do this together and I am so glad she did! This will be my second year.

**Best thing learned at NCPG so far:** We are all going through this together!

# NCPG CAMPUS MAP

SAINT BARNABAS ON THE DESERT EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ 85253



6718 NORTH MOCKINGBIRD LANE

# Meet the Board!



## Ilyssa Reading PRESIDENT

**Kids:** Kate (4 1/2) & Oliver (2 1/2)

**Class:** Pre-K/Jr. Kindergarten

**Favorite family tradition:** I love taking my kids to a pumpkin patch every October! We have tried out a few different ones over the years, but our favorite is Mortimer Farms. They have tons of activities and it actually feels like fall since it's a bit up north!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Manhattan Beach, CA

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Space Mountain for a thrill and Peter Pan for nostalgia

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** One thing I don't think I could live without is my Peloton! Working out keeps me sane and it makes it easy to get a class in when I can't leave the house.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** My mom made photo albums of my entire childhood and they are some of my favorite things to go back and look at as an adult. Because of this, I make a photobook for each of my kids every year on their birthday. I'm hoping to keep it up until they each turn 18!

**Why did you join NCPG?** I was the first of my group of friends to have kids and was desperate to meet other moms and to learn how to keep a tiny human alive! A co-worker/friend told me about NCPG and I joined when I was pregnant with my oldest.



## Jenna Roehm VICE PRESIDENT

**Kids:** Riley (3) and JJ (3 months)

**Class:** 3B

**Favorite family tradition:** Family story time before bed! We all snuggle in bed for one book and a quick recap of the day!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Bora Bora

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Space Mountain

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Play Kitchen, because it provides hours of entertainment and uses the imagination!

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** We have pancake or waffles on weekend mornings.

**Why did you join NCPG?** I joined NCPG to find a group of women/moms to help support me through parenthood journey!



## Aarika Gaona TREASURER

**Kids:** Leo (4) & Lila (18 months)

**Class:** Pre K

**Favorite family tradition:** Our family 4th of July cabin weekend or anything having to do with Christmas. Decorating our Christmas tree, opening stockings on Christmas morning, making Christmas cookies, and wearing Christmas pajamas on Christmas Eve. It's all pretty magical seeing Leo and Lila experience the holidays.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Cabo (without kids) or San Diego (with kids)

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I haven't been to Disneyland since I was a child and we have yet to take our kids. So, I will report back on this answer. Accepting any and all tips on kids first Disney trip.

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** The Doona carseat/stroller. I did not have one when Leo was born, but decided to get one when I was pregnant with Lila. She is too big for it now but it was the best when she was little. You cannot beat the convenience, especially for a second child. I really loved being able to pop Lila in and out of the car at school drop off and pick up (without having to carry the carseat or get out the stroller) was a life saver.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Baking. My mom would always bake with us as kids and it is something that I really enjoy doing with Leo and Lila.

**Why did you join NCPG?** I joined NCPG with the hope of meeting a group of "mom friends" who had children around Leo's age. Becoming a mom really rocked my world when Leo was born and I have loved having the support of other moms raising kids who are the same age as mine. I feel like I have gained some life long friends, in my NCPG class, as well as on the NCPG Board.



## Jen Dupuy EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**Kids:** Beau (4) and Blake (2)

**Class:** Pre K

**Favorite family tradition:** Our annual long-weekend trip just the four of us. We choose a new location each year!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Without kids: Italy! With Kids: Anywhere with

lots of things to do/explore and the opportunity to be outside as much as possible.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I haven't been since I was little — excited to take the boys sometime soon!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** The Doona carseat/stroller. I did not have one when Leo was born, but decided to get one when I was pregnant with Lila. She is too big for it now but it was the best when she was little. You cannot beat the convenience, especially for a second child. I really loved being able to pop Lila in and out of the car at school drop off and pick up (without having to carry the carseat or get out the stroller) was a life saver.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Of course I love passing down all the holiday traditions and fun - Easter Bunny foot prints, Christmas scavenger hunt, etc. but on a day to day level, my parents always made it a priority to sit down to dinner as a family and we try to do that as much as possible.

**Why did you join NCPG?** I joined NCPG (starting in Newborn A) to get the parenting knowledge and information as well as the opportunity to meet and develop friendships with other moms. The community of NCPG is amazing!



## Naomi Bentley SPONSORSHIP

**Kids:** Bella Kate (2 years, 9 months)

**Class:** 3A

**Favorite family tradition:** Making the pumpkin patch rounds in October, even though it's still over 100 degrees! The three of us making monkey bread on Christmas morning has become a new favorite tradition.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Newport Beach

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** It's been a minute, but I guess Space Mountain? Can't wait to experience the magic through her eyes and on slightly tamer rides.

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Lately we love building castles with her magnetic building tiles.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Making and enjoying quality family dinners together.

**Why did you join NCPG?** To prioritize my most important role, make mama friends, and join a community that would help me navigate all the questions, ups and downs of motherhood.



## Brooke Dahn SPONSORSHIP

**Kids:** Dallas (1)

**Class:** 1A

**Favorite family tradition:** Dance parties while getting Dallas ready for bed.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Without hesitation, San Diego!

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** We have yet to venture here, but it is on the list!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** The Measuring spoons! My daughter seems to love anything that isn't actually a kid toy or gadget.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Family dinner. We always ate as a family growing up and I think it is important to come together at the end of the day.

**Why did you join NCPG?** To learn how to better raise small humans and meet other moms looking to do the same!



## Mary Patterson SPONSORSHIP

**Kids:** Charlotte (3.5), James (1.5)

**Class:** 4A

**Favorite family tradition:** We love all traditions around the holidays. It's been so much fun taking our kids to all the fun holiday festivities in Phoenix. We especially love Zoo Lights and the Train Park.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without**

**kids:** Beach! We love spending time in San Diego with our kids and also love a parents weekend away near a beach or pool.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I haven't been in forever, but I always loved Splash Mountain.

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** The Nugget cushions. Our kids always find new ways to play with them and it keeps them entertained. We also have fun building forts with them.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Family dinners. When we can, we try to eat together even if it's total chaos!

**Why did you join NCPG?** I joined NCPG when we moved to Phoenix 3 years ago

(continued on next page)

to meet moms with kiddos the same age as my daughter. I also loved the idea of learning about topics relevant to your child's age. But mainly just wanted to be part of this awesome community!



**Delia Prucz** PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Kids:** Pierson (3), Preston (1)

**Class:** 3B

**Favorite family tradition:** We do a staycation at the Princess every year in December. We did it prior to having kids as well but it's just so much more special now.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:**

My husband and I went on our first cruise in years over the summer. It traveled to Spain, Italy, & France.

We are HUGE fans now. Royal Caribbean makes these gigantic hotels on water. We cannot wait to take our kids next time.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Soarin' Over California

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Not so much a toy but it's something I always have in my car. I bring a floor mat to put under the high chairs at restaurants. The restaurant staff is always so grateful and they always treat us better because they know there won't be a mountain of crumbs after we eat.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** When my husband and kids are sleeping, I turn into Mona (my mom) and deep clean, reorganize and paint the house. My 3-year-old always wakes up and notices everything. "Good cleaning mommy" he says.

**Why did you join NCPG?** My friend, Jessica Forsberg, told me about it and I am so incredibly grateful for the introduction. I honestly didn't know what to expect. I'm so happy I blindly signed up. It is such an incredible group of women & instructors!



**Sara Ortega** SPECIAL EVENTS

**Kids:** Poppy (2 1/2), Baby #2 (due 9/27)

**Class:** 3A

**Favorite family tradition:** When the weather is nice, we love visiting our favorite coffee shop, Fourtillfour, on the weekends. They do 'coffee and cars' on Saturday mornings. Poppy gets to check out cool cars while eating coffee cake and we get

to sip on yummy coffee!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** We love visiting the beach in South Carolina every summer. Poppy is definitely a beach babe!

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Thunder Mountain. It's very nostalgic to me and a Disneyland OG! I remember riding it over and over as a kid. Can't wait to take our kids!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Lovevery toy subscription. We've been getting them since Poppy was born and I am a HUGE fan!!

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** We've carried on a lot of little traditions around Christmas time that I loved growing up! It's such a magical time of the year... even more so with kids!

**Why did you join NCPG?** For the community! It's so nice to be surrounded by moms who are in the same chapter of life as you!



**Lauren Siddall** SPECIAL EVENTS

**Kids:** Mila (2), Baby 2 due 10/15!

**Class:** I'm not sure actually!

**Favorite family tradition:** Opening our matching Christmas pjs on Christmas Eve

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Somewhere new, we've never been! A close second is tied between Telluride, CO and

Coronado, CA.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Space mountain (is that still a ride?!)

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Aden & Anais grey lovey referred to as "Baby".

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Unique lullabies my mom would sing to us growing up.

**Why did you join NCPG?** Everyone I knew who'd participated said it was a great community & resource. They were right.



**Brittany Beatty** SOCIAL

**Kids:** Emory (4), Landon (22 months)

**Class:** Pre-K

**Favorite family tradition:** We sign the tablecloth at dinner every Christmas. It's been a tradition in my family since I was a toddler and I am excited to see the evolution in my kids handwriting, sayings, drawings as they grow older.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** With the kids, Flagstaff. Without the kids, Spain!

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Splash Mountain! I can't wait until my little ones are big enough.

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Right now, it's all things Cars. Hot wheels, racing, playing parking garage, the movies. It's the one thing my kids enjoy playing together and as all Moms know, that is gold.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Lots of little things – playing tickle torture, picnic dinners, ripping the bread for Thanksgiving stuffing, a new ornament at Christmas based on my kids interests, puzzles at the cabin.

**Why did you join NCPG?** I wanted to connect with other Moms. The reassurance on tough parenting days is invaluable!



**Cristin Salzman** SOCIAL

**Kids:** Charlotte (8), Hannah (5), Frankie (3), Ozzie (6 months)

**Class:** Kinder

**Favorite family tradition:** Cutting down our Christmas tree up north.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Anywhere with a beach and Sedona.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Space Mountain

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Collapsible travel bouncer for infants (Fisher-Price).

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Homemade Christmas cookies.

**Why did you join NCPG?** I wanted to meet other moms who were in the same place in life with their children as I was.



**Whitney Emerson** OUTREACH

**Kids:** Harper (4), Ezra (16 months)!

**Class:** Pre-K

**Favorite family tradition:** There are so many! We have a lot of holiday traditions, but my absolute favorite would have to be our annual summer vacations.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:**

Our favorite vacation spot with kids is Greece. Tons of beaches and it's so kid friendly. Getting there is a little rough, but once you are there it's amazing!

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I haven't been back in years...I used to love Space Mountain and the Haunted Mansion. Ask me again after we go at the end of the month for our first trip with kids.

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** This is a hard one... I would probably say a sound machine. Our whole family is so conditioned to sleeping with white noise. We even have one in our room now haha.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Baking! My mom always did a ton of baking with me and my brothers growing up, and I have such fond memories of it. I love sharing that experience and the recipes with my kids too! Plus, it's a great way to incorporate math and fine motor skills.

**Why did you join NCPG?** To meet other moms and learn. I have learned so much from the instructors over the years and met so many great friends.



**Rachel Hall** OUTREACH

**Kids:** Charlie (4), Grace (2), Wesley (3 months)

**Class:** Pre-K

**Favorite family tradition:** My Dad is an incredible baker and Christmas cookies and caramels were a huge thing in our house growing up. I have loved sharing that experience with Charlie and Grace; the warmth of

the Christmas season and passing on family recipes. They have taken it to the next level and believe there should be a specialty cookie, dessert, etc. to go with every holiday; including the ones they make up Ha! Ha!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Coronado holds a special place in my heart; my husband proposed on the beach and we have created amazing memories with our children and extended families there. It's easy to get to, has a wonderful community, great restaurants and is so so close to all San Diego has to offer.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I haven't been to Disneyland in a long time so I'm going to go out on a limb and hope The Matterhorn and Space Mountain are still there.

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** This sounds so basic but I have to say the Hatch sound machine. It has been a huge help in establishing good sleep routines.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Don't sweat the small stuff. My Mom has always been great at maintaining a positive attitude and having fun through the chaos of raising four children and being very involved in our schools, activities, etc.. It is something I try to emulate and remember when I'm getting overwhelmed with three small children. Try to find the joy in the chaos, meet them where they're at and laugh about it once everyone's asleep.

**Why did you join NCPG?** I wanted to meet more moms that were in the same stage of parenthood. I grew up in Phoenix and wanted a community to ask questions to, bounce experiences off of and laugh with through the craziness.



**Catherine Jacobson**

COMMUNICATIONS

**Kids:** Beckett (17 months)

**Class:** 1B

**Favorite family tradition:** All things Christmas

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Cabo!

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Pirates of the

Caribbean!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** When my son was younger it was the babybjorn bouncer. Nothing has lived up to that so far in terms of not being able to live without!

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Holiday traditions were a huge part of my childhood and many of these traditions have stuck with me as an adult. It is important to me that I create similar memories and experiences with my own family that can continue for years that they hopefully want to carry on as well.

**Why did you join NCPG?** To be able to meet other mamas with similar aged kids and get much needed, expert advice as a first-time mom.



**Amanda Shaw**

COMMUNICATIONS

**Kids:** Milly Frances (6), Franklin Paul (4) and Gwendolyn Ann (2)

**Class:** Elementary

**Favorite family tradition:** Our tradition is in line with the following question... we take a family trip to central Washington over the 4th of July with a ton of my cousins. Each family

rents a home in the same community and its 3 generations of family together. It is something our kids look forward to every year and an opportunity for us to be together as a family. It is complete chaos with about 60 family members but so much fun!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Lake Chelan, WA! This place is a little slice of heaven! It is in central Washington surrounded by rolling hills and vineyards. The weather is typically in the 90's when we go, perfect for jumping in the lake! It's a trek to get there, about 3.5 hours from Seattle but totally worth the drive!

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Splash Mountain! We took our 6 and 4 year old to Disneyland last year and seeing their faces as we went down the huge hill was so priceless!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** I wish I knew about these for my first baby but a friend gave me "silver nipples" after our third was born. They are total game changers! I never had to use cream or anything and had NO issues breastfeeding! For anyone having a baby, I would highly recommend them... you can find them on Amazon!

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Since I'm a child of the 90's my mom LOVED to scrapbook! She would make scrapbooks for my brother and I for pretty much everything, childhood, sports, vacations, you name it! They are still so fun to look through and I've started the modern day version of that with our kids. I create "Chat-books" for each kid every year. It starts with their birthday and goes through the entire year. They sit out in our family room because we all love looking through them so much!

**Why did you join NCPG?** The community! I love the women that are a part of it, I think the teachers are fantastic and provide incredible value to my life. It's been a huge blessing!

(continued on next page)



## Alana Hildebrand

### CHILDCARE

**Kids:** Carson (4.5) and Hattie (2.5)

**Class:** Pre-K

**Favorite family tradition:** - I'm a sucker for the holidays so I can't pick one. I love all the fall things like visiting the pumpkin patches and dressing the kiddos up for Halloween. Cutting down our Christmas tree up near

the Rim with my sister's family, her in-laws and other family friends. Annual gingerbread house building at my in-laws and we're starting our Polar Express train ride tradition with my in-laws this year.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Seville, Spain or Maui, HI without (although we hope to take them to both sooner than later) Carlsbad, CA with the kiddos.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** We haven't done Disney yet but the kids loved Legoland, top rides were the Duplo Train and Cargo Ace Plane.

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** For my son it's Legos they are his favorite these days and holds his interest for hours for my daughter any of her babies/stuffed animals for me sleep sacks! I swear by the sleep sacks for keeping the babies cozy in their crib.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Have Santa come see them a few nights before Christmas and bring them a small gift off their list as well as matching family pajamas Christmas Eve.

**Why did you join NCPG?** When I was first pregnant, my sister's best friend was a board member and she introduced me to NCPG. I could immediately see it was an amazing group of strong women seeking to learn and understand what's best for their babies and their families and I wanted to be a part of something so special and informative like that too. I also love that we're able to give back to our community here in The Valley!



## Alicia Schroeder

### CHILDCARE

**Kids:** Vale (4), Hana (19 months), Baby Boy (due 9/13)

**Class:** 4B (I think!)

**Favorite family tradition:** Christmas tree hanging.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:**

Anywhere in the mountains of Colorado.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I don't love Disneyland!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Tablet! Unpopular opinion maybe, but lots of benefits (fine motor skills, learning, buys-mom and dad time when needed!)

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Skiing/Family dinners

**Why did you join NCPG?** Recommended by a good friend to get info and meet mom friends :)



## Alexis Smith

### MEMBERSHIP

**Kids:** Hunter (4), Selah (2), Alexander (5 weeks old)

**Class:** Pre-K

**Favorite family tradition:** The night before each of our childrens birthdays my husband and i go out to dinner just the two of us, to celebrate. We talk about their birth story

and go over the highs and lows of the year, and then we decorate and setup their gifts!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Our favorite vacation spot with our kids is going up north to falgstaff.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Mad Hatter's Tea Party

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** I'd say magnatiles. My kids can play with them for hours and I enjoy building them too!

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** My parents were pretty strict about sitting down every night to have family dinners. Now that I am a mom, it definitely is hard to accomplish that every single night, however we do sunday dinners and I love that we all look forward to all sitting down and having a special meal together.

**Why did you join NCPG?** I had heard so many great things about the organization from other mamas, and i wanted to get involved. Also, parenting is hard! I was very eager to attend classes and receive information on child development to help me be a better parent.



## Michelle Van Der Werf

### MEMBERSHIP

**Kids:** Finn (10), Ascher (4), Landon (2)

**Class:** Pre-K

**Favorite family tradition:** Matching holiday jammies and a visit to Christmas at the Princess hotel.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Love visiting beaches with or without children.

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Mad Hatter's Tea Party

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** The boys love hot wheels, puzzles and their softies.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** My mom is from Germany so we carried on the tradition of multiple advent calendars around the holidays.

**Why did you join NCPG?** To learn more about being a mom and meet other mommas which has been perfect for both!



## Meredith Marks

### EDUCATION

**Kids:** Lincoln (17 months) as of today (Born 3-11-21)

**Class:** 2-A

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** Anywhere out of the country

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Thunder Mountain

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** We love our water table- we spend hours outside playing with it.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Family dinners every night

**Why did you join NCPG?** To learn about the developmental stages of my child and to meet some awesome mom's with kids the same age.



## Jennifer Marusiak

### EDUCATION

**Kids:** Bobby (2.5 years old) and Kent (9 months)

**Class:** 3A

**Favorite family tradition:** Going to Flagstaff in the summertime

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without**

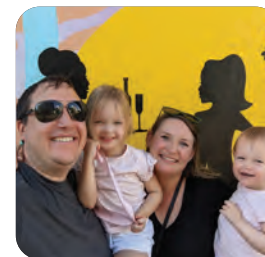
**kids:** Italy

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I've only been once and can't remember the names of any of the rides!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Probably the stroller. I use that thing all the time! When I go shopping without the kids, I miss having the stroller to hold all of my stuff!

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Just to love them the way our parents love us!

**Why did you join NCPG?** To have a place to learn and grow as a mother and to meet other like-minded moms! So happy I did!



## Amy Dillon

### FUNDRAISING

**Kids:** Charlotte (4), Alice (2)

**Class:** 4A

**Favorite family tradition:** Drive-through Christmas lights show in holiday jammies.

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:**

Rocky Point, MX – the closest beach!

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** Space Mountain

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Magnatiles – the kids love them, and we have fun playing with them as well hah.

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Having a "party" on weekend nights – they get to stay up a little later to watch a movie and have "party snacks" (something sweet and salty like popcorn with marshmallows)

**Why did you join NCPG?** I wanted to meet other moms and have a sounding board for concerns and questions as I navigate this life with kiddos. There is something so comforting chatting with other moms who are going through the same things as you.



## Jill McMeekin

### FUNDRAISING

**Kids:** Grace (4.5) and Sara (2)

**Class:** Pre-K

**Favorite family tradition:** Baking and decorating sugar cookies at Christmas!

**Favorite vacation spot, with or without kids:** North Carolina or Greece

**Favorite ride at Disneyland:** I'll get back to you on that after we go!

**Favorite kids toy or gadget. One thing you can't live without and why!** Dolls!

**What is something that you've taken from your parents that you do with your child/children now?** Teaching them how important it is to give back!

**Why did you join NCPG?** My 2nd grade teacher told me about NCPG. I joined in 2017 and haven't looked back!



Past president, Megan Garvey and family celebrate the 4th of July!



# dwellinspect

ARIZONA

Arizona's FASTEST GROWING  
Home Inspection and Consulting Firm

- Home
- Business
- Termites
- Mold
- Sprinklers
- Sewer
- Pool
- 200% Guarantee

480.867.4599 | [dwellinspectaz.com](http://dwellinspectaz.com)

\*\*\* Family Owned and Operated by NCPG Member, Megan Garvey \*\*\*

# 2022-2023 Calendar

## Class Schedule

**8:45 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 am-1:15 pm** Newborn A & Middle School Class



### Saint Barnabas on the Desert Episcopal Church

6715 N. Mockingbird Lane  
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

## Class Dates

September 14**	January 25
September 28	February 8**
October 12	March 8**
October 26	March 22
November 9**	April 5
November 30	April 19
January 11**	May 3**

\*\*Parent Times magazine distributed.

## Board Meeting Schedule

June 6	January 9
August 29	February 6
September 13	March 6
October 3	April 3
November 7	May 1
December 5	

## Board

## Announcements

### General

We are so excited to be back at St. Barnabas and want to make sure they feel the same! As a reminder, please park in the designated parking spots and only use the handicap parking spots if you have a permit to do so. St. Barnabas has also asked us to leave our food and drinks outside of the classrooms. Water is, of course, allowed, but other food/beverages are not permitted. As a rule of thumb, we want to leave our rooms and spaces better than we found them :) Thank you for your help in doing so!

### Membership

**It is not too late to register!** Tuition is \$399 and spots are given on a first come, first served basis. We have several classes that still have space! Spread the word to your mom tribe that they can now send their registrations in to join NCPG before it is too late. For more information, contact [membership@ncpgaz.org](mailto:membership@ncpgaz.org) or check the website.

### Communications

Send us your photos to be featured in the upcoming issues of *Parent Times* magazine to [communications@ncpgaz.org](mailto:communications@ncpgaz.org). We are looking for family photos, class events and playdate shots, as well as high-resolution, professional cover photos.

We also want to celebrate all of the new NCPG babies and showcase them in our magazine! Please let us know if you've recently welcomed a new baby into your family and send us a photo, plus all of the baby deets (name, weight, height, DOB!) to [communications@ncpgaz.org](mailto:communications@ncpgaz.org).

*As a reminder, try to submit hi-resolution photos (300 dpi) or best phone resolution possible!*

### Social

Please join us between 9:00 and 9:40 AM for breakfast prior to class inside Hutton Hall.



### Childcare

We are proud to welcome back Busy Bee's into our amazing space. **The cost will be \$50 for the first child and \$25 for each additional child and is available from 8:45am-11:45am.** Childcare registration can be completed online and registration will open the Wednesday two weeks prior to each class. Registration for childcare closes 48 hours prior to class so please be sure to sign up in advance. Please contact [childcare@ncpgaz.org](mailto:childcare@ncpgaz.org) for any questions and visit our website for full details and directions on registering.



### Public Relations



Be sure to follow [@ncpgaz on Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/ncpgaz) and [NCPG Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ncpgaz) for the latest announcements and updates. These are private pages for current members only.

### Sponsorship

If you have or know of a business who might be interested in being a sponsor or advertiser with NCPG, please email us at [sponsorship@ncpgaz.org](mailto:sponsorship@ncpgaz.org). NCPG members receive 20% off all sponsorship packages. Please visit the sponsorship tables before class throughout the year!

### MOTHERHOOD

Powered by love.  
Fueled by coffee.  
Sustained by wine.



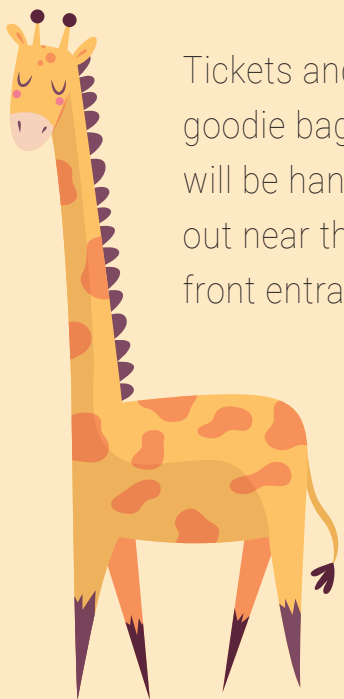
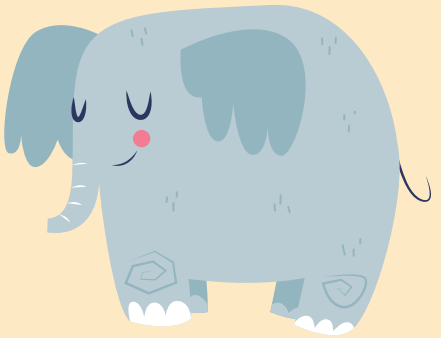
## Special Event

### Zoo Play Date 9.25.22

Please join us  
for NCPG's first  
social event  
of the year!



Our annual Zoo Play Date  
will be on Sunday, September  
25th from 8:30 to 10:30 AM.



Tickets and  
goodie bags  
will be handed  
out near the  
front entrance.



## Member to Meet Jill Stadum-Binning, 1B

**Child:** Graham, 16 months **Spouse:** Matthew Binning

**Hometown:** Sturgis, South Dakota

**Career or former career:** Realtor/Investor

**Favorite date night spot:** Buck and Rider

**Favorite local family spot to dine:** We love Lou's at Papago!

**Favorite place to vacation with the family:** We are a part mountain, part beach family. San Diego, CA and Bend, Oregon are both on the top of our list.

**How do you balance meeting your children's needs as well as your own:** I'm a strong believer in asking for help and hiring where possible for the things that do not bring you joy. I'm definitely still working on balancing.

**Favorite local place to take your children for fun:** My child is social. He loves other children, so park play dates are his favorite.

**Best advice for traveling with kids:** We have traveled so much with Graham, including several flights with just him and I. My best advice is to have things to do and allow people to help. It gets easier every flight.

**How do you simplify your morning routine with kids:**

Well, my child usually looks great and me, not so much. So, spending less time on my hair and makeup.

**Most meaningful moment as a parent:** Watching my son learn and have new experiences.

**Most "OMG did that really happen" moment as a parent:** Definitely giving birth. Nothing has been as hard as natural birth.

**Best parenting advice given to you:** Spend as much time with your children as possible when they are young. Also, do not panic, everything will be ok.

**How were you introduced to NCPG and how many years have you been a part of the group:** It was recommended from a friend. This is my second year!

**Best thing learned at NCPG so far:** I cannot give just one answer. For me, I enjoy the other moms so much. We have such a great group of women who offer all different points of view. It is priceless to have other moms to bounce ideas off. NCPG has taught me parenting is just wild. It is nice to have others around you and doing it together.



**ST. FRANCIS XAVIER**  
A Jesuit Catholic Elementary School  
Preschool - 8th Grade



Our Preschool & Kindergarten Open House will be held on Thursday, October 27th, 8:00 am to 9:30 am. Please visit our admissions page at [school.sfxphx.org](http://school.sfxphx.org) for the details and to register.

**Preschool & Kindergarten Open House**  
Thursday,  
Oct. 27th, 2022



**SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE**  
ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL



*Where Faith Inspires Hearts and Minds*

4510 N 24th Street • Phoenix, AZ 85016 • (602) 954-9088 • [staphxschool.org](http://staphxschool.org)



Our mission is to teach our children the life and message of Christ by instilling deep faith, academic excellence and a commitment to service.

Ask us about our **FUNDforALLSTA** program making Catholic education affordable and accessible to families of all income levels!

This school is authorized under Federal law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students.

**Moving Together Therapy**



Providing pediatric in-home and in-office physical therapy services to children from birth through adolescence, across the valley.





Dr Erin Dinnie. PT, DPT, COMT  
Phone: 480.359.5206  
[www.movingtogethertherapy.com](http://www.movingtogethertherapy.com)

Now Providing in office visits in the Kokua Wellness Suite. 8687 E Via De Ventura, Suite #111 Scottsdale, AZ 85258.



4848 E Thomas Rd, PHX 85018  
ph: (602) 524- 4977 e: [info@montessorioroom.com](mailto:info@montessorioroom.com)



"This school and the teachers here are really an extension of my family."



Authentic Montessori Preschool. Designed by teachers, loved by parents.






Jill McMeekin



Niki Evans



Ashley Preach



Meredith Belcher



Brittney Paulus



Meredith Marks



Brooke Dahn



Laci Hartline



Stephanie Simpson



Kimberly McLaughlin



Alicia Schroeder



Delia Prucz



Ilyssa Reading



Ilyssa Reading



Catherine Jacobson



Adrienne Kuchulis



Gina Sandor



Jen Dupuy

# Meet Our Amazing Teachers!

NCPG is delighted to have an outstanding group of teachers returning to NCPG this year, and have also expanded our teacher community with the addition of a fabulous new teacher. We encourage you to get to know each of these highly educated and knowledgeable women.



**Monique Nelson**  
NEWBORN A AND NEWBORN B

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG?: 24 years

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization?: I love that this group offers both lectures and support

What is one piece of advice you would give our members?: It is ok to make mistakes. We all make them as parents. We can't do it all and it is ok to let some things go! We are not superheroes.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age?: Unconditional love, setting reasonable limits, and letting kids do for themselves what they are capable of.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face?: Pressure from others - friends, coworkers, parents, or in-laws, even though they all mean well. My advice is to take the advice that works for you and then do what feels right. Let your mama instincts guide you. As long as you love your kids unconditionally you will raise happy, well-rounded kids!



**Melissa Thomson**  
NEWBORN A AND NEWBORN B

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG?: This is my first year teaching!

What is one piece of advice you would give our members?: Allow yourself grace. A lot of grace! Your baby did not come with a manual. Every baby/child is different and has different needs.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age?: Listen to your children. When they feel heard and validated, they know their feelings and thoughts are worth it!

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? I think one of the biggest challenges is comparing yourself to other mothers. It can be so toxic to compare what you can and can't do for your children. There will always be mothers who have the perfect Instagram photos that look like their life is together - we are all just figuring this out one day at a time. You were given your child for a reason and all they need is you and your time, whatever that may look like!



**Blaire Hinks** 1A

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 4

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? Getting to know

wonderful mommas and loving on them for doing their best.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Give yourself grace! Parenting is hard and comes with failure. The sooner you can accept your hard moments with a positive space and compassion for yourself, the better you will be able to show up for yourself and your family.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Instilling confidence in your little ones comes in a multi-level approach. It starts with you and showing them your own confidence, but most importantly, letting them see you fail and try again. Let your little ones try and try again. Don't be quick to stop them from failing. Teach them how to handle failure, then praise the heck out of them when they accomplish something after putting forth such an amazing effort.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? We live in a scary and different world these days. We are in a world where we have access to so much information, good and bad. It can instill anxiety in a parent that can take you by storm. The strongest form of information you can access is your momma intuition. Trust it! Don't do what's best for someone else, do what's best for YOU and your family.



**Amy Stewart** MSN, RN, CPN  
1B

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 11 years

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? I love meeting amazing women and helping them gain greater confidence in their mothering

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? You are not alone!

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Tell your child you love them through words and actions such as simply having fun, laughing, and intentionally playing with your child.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? Parenting is full of challenges! Feelings of overwhelm and self-doubt in parenting are some of the biggest challenges that my clients identify. Through our year together in NCPG I am committed to helping members find greater clarity and confidence.



**Laurel Hamilton** 2A

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? This is my first year as an educator with NCPG

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? In today's world family is often not close by or grandparents are busy with their own adventures. My favorite thing about NCPG is that it provides a source of support and bridges that gap for families.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Children, families, marriages all ebb and flow. If you're in a tough phase, it will get better. If you're in a good rhythm, enjoy it because a challenge will come soon enough. You've got this!

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Confidence and resilience are the best gifts we can give our children. Provide them with age-appropriate independent learning experiences and allow room to make mistakes. Give them space and opportunities to explore the world around them.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? Right now the biggest thing parents face is pressure for perfection and social media's impact. Trust your instincts and do what's best for your family. Everything else is noise. Stick to what your child and family needs. Remember, comparison is the thief of joy.



**Kristin Klecka** 2B

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 7

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? Definitely the

members. Between the supportive board members and my classes, I have never experienced a more wonderful group of women. They are kind, accomplished, and amazing mothers. I feel privileged to spend my Wednesdays with them!

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Stay calm and pick your battles. Every phase of your child's life is going to be filled with difficulties and frustrations. How you respond to these difficult times will dictate everything. Take deep breaths, walk out of the room, and return when you are capable of staying calm.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Give them age-appropriate tasks and allow them to learn from their mistakes. If you consistently do everything for your children, you are sending them the message that you don't think they are capable of doing it on their own. They will gain confidence with every task they accomplish. The key is you have to let them fail...that's the hard part!

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? Technology. In my experience as a parent it is one of the most difficult things to navigate. Unfortunately, it isn't going away and I see it becoming an even bigger problem for the younger generation. It's a battle that seems impossible to win.



**Chelsea Kunde** 3A

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG?: 3

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization?: The discussions and

relationships. My favorite part of my job is teaching here. It is not lost on me how blessed we all are to have NCPG. I would have been lost without it in those early years of parenting. And now teaching, I still get a chance to learn from the parents as well. I get to share, be vulnerable, and make changes in my own life too. I honestly love NCPG and am so thankful to be a part of it.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Be confident in your parenting decisions and follow your gut. No one will ever get it right 100% of the time. Everyone will do things differently and remember that you are the expert in your family!

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Be genuine. Praise them, but don't overdo it. I always say, kids smell bs

from a mile away. Also, help them through, but don't fix the failures and the frustrations. Confidence is not only built when you succeed, but also is built when you learn and recover from the downs.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? I think a major challenge is the idea of parent perfection. Social media only reinforces this unattainable idea. I always have to remind myself to only follow accounts that make me happy and not ones that make me feel bad. It is a simple concept, but one I fall short on often. Perfection will never happen and the idea that we need to do it all, have it all, be it all... frankly, does a disservice to everyone. I hope NCPG provides a safe space for parents to show the imperfect and provide practical support!



**Barb Grady** 3B

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 30

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? It is my calling and I

love it! I feel grateful to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? If you don't know what to do ask yourself, what would love do?

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Fostering positive self-esteem. Research is clear about what you need to do to create positive self-esteem:

- Work on your own self-esteem and self-love--you can't give what you don't have. You need to feel lovable and worthwhile simply because you exist--and so do your kids. Unconditionally love yourself and your child.
- Allow your child to own and express their feelings. Create emotional safety.
- Encourage rather than praise
- Notice rather than judge
- Spend one on one time with your child each day when you are fully present, this is the 15-minute miracle.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? There are challenges galore in parenting--physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Connecting to NCPG to get the support and information you need is priceless!!



**Emma Porter** 4A

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 3

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? Connecting with all the moms and hearing their stories.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Apologize to your kids when you get it wrong. It's okay to admit you're not perfect and model that everyone needs to say they're sorry sometimes.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Let them try things. Let them figure out their own boundaries and what they are capable of.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? We have access to so many opinions and information on how to parent, which is a challenge and a blessing. This can often create a narrative in our head that we are doing it wrong because someone is doing it differently than we are.



Annemarie Mansour 4B

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 5

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? Knowing that I can provide a safe space for parents to share their experiences and support each other on this journey...and the breakfast burritos.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? It may seem silly, but to quote Dory from finding Nemo, "just keep swimming, just keep swimming...". When things seem overwhelming, take a breath, pause, and recognize that things may feel like a lot at the moment. Remind yourself that you've got this and then, just keep swimming.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Protecting our children from disappointments and struggles at an early age and doing things for them when they are capable of doing things themselves are things that we do without noticing but will get in the way of instilling confidence. Allowing your children to experience disappointment, fail at something, and make mistakes while guiding them through what they can learn from those experiences will help foster their confidence. I also suggest praising perseverance and encouraging your child to try new things. Not giving up and learning something new are fantastic ways to build confidence.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? One of the biggest challenges parents face today is balancing all that life throws at you. Work, family, school, activities, extended family, stress, self-care, time with your partner and so on. There never seems to be enough time in the day to give everything the attention it needs. Allowing time to pause, breathe, and slow down takes practice and is much needed in today's world.



Lisa Ameis PRE-K

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 2

Favorite part of teaching with NCPG: The opportunity to meet and get to

know moms from all backgrounds as well as being able to share my experiences and knowledge.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Don't blink! Time with your children will go so fast! Enjoy all the minutes and milestones.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Spend as much time together as possible. Really listen to them, and make sure your face lights up every time they walk into the room.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? Don't compare yourself as a parent or as a family unit to anyone else. Strive for balance and listen to your inner voice.



Jemeille Ackourey KINDERGARTEN

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 7

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? Watching moms grow their confidence and trust their instincts.

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Show yourself grace. Give yourself care. Ask for help. Learn to enjoy and embrace the here and now. Remember to breathe.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Let them know that they are competent and resilient by allowing them space to do it themselves. True, memorable success comes after many mistakes and failures.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? Living "the should's." Social media doesn't help. Too often, we compare and judge ourselves and our children to those around us. It will inevitably leave us and our children feeling "not good enough." This is how we destroy confidence and self-esteem.



Michelle Cox ELEMEN-TARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

How many years have you been teaching for NCPG? 7

What is your favorite part of teaching for this organization? The amazing women I get to meet. We have the best!

What is one piece of advice you would give our members? Be nice to you. No one needs you to be a perfect parent so please don't beat yourself up trying.

What are the best ways to instill confidence in children at an early age? Help kiddos identify what is going well and to value the learning that comes from mistakes.

What do you think are the biggest challenges parents face? There are so many! I think one of the biggest barriers for parents is the pressure to get "it" right. Pick the right school, make the right decision, handle a hard situation the right way, don't repeat the mistakes of your parents. There is an unstated belief that if we don't handle parenting right, then we'll be responsible for screwing up our kids. NOT TRUE!

'I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think.'

- SOCRATES -



The dream begins, most of the time, with a teacher who believes in you, who tugs and pushes and leads you on to the next plateau, sometimes poking you with a sharp stick called truth.

- DAN RATHER -

Class Descriptions

NEWBORN A (Child due between October and May) This class provides the foundation for a successful transition into motherhood. There are many new things to learn about a newborn's development, behaviors, and most importantly needs. Please feel free to bring your infant with you to class if you should have him or her during the school year!

NEWBORN B (0-5 months old) All the infant "firsts" are shared and cherished in these important first six months. Bedtime routines are established and new foods are introduced. Please feel free to bring your infant (0-6 months old) to class with you!

CLASS 1A (6-11 months old) The entirety of the first year is discussed and celebrated. The child is developing new behaviors and reaching milestones in crawling, walking and babbling.

CLASS 1B (12-17 months) Bye bye baby-hello toddler! Mobility and exploration are under way. In this class we cover discipline, napping, language development and social skills. We also discuss preschool readiness, preparing for siblings and potty training. The goal of this class is to help prepare parents for the many transitions that are a part of this stage of development.

CLASS 2A & CLASS 2B (18-29 months) Helping parents prepare and guide their children through the major transitions of this stage and year ahead. Preparing for preschool, potty training, moving from the crib to the bed, behavioral changes and social interaction are the goals of this class.

CLASS 3A & CLASS 3B (30-41 months) This class focuses on the struggle for power between child and parent, providing useful and effective parenting strategies while respecting the child's need for independence. Sibling interaction and the family are discussed as well.

CLASS 4A & CLASS 4B (42-53 months) This class devotes much time to children's social development, covering a variety of issues from anger management to conflict resolution to peer relationships. Additionally, topics in this class will include: establishing family rules, building self-confidence and self-reliance, and encouraging cognitive and physical development.

PRE-K OR JR. KINDERGARTEN (Enrolled in Pre-K or Jr. Kindergarten) Parents discuss and prepare for the next step into kindergarten, including but not limited to: choosing a school that meets their child's and family's needs, learning math and reading tools that will enhance kindergarten success, and finding ways to encourage self-confidence and independence. Also, every class features take home crafts and recipes that focus on kindergarten readiness skills.

KINDERGARTEN (Enrolled in Kindergarten) Come to this class for support, encouragement, and many laughs as we help moms and their children transition into elementary school. Topics will focus on nurturing a child's autonomy, helping them set appropriate boundaries, fostering their awareness, and encouraging responsibility.

ELEMENTARY (Grades 1-4) This class helps Valley parents navigate the challenges of parenting increasingly independent children. These classes will cover topics such as: how to partner with your child's teacher and school, bullying recognition and prevention, nutrition for learning, deepening your relationship with your child as he/she gets older, parenting in the digital age, raising your child to be an innovator, and encouraging autonomy.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 5-8) Our Middle School class is designed to help parents prepare for the teenage years. These classes will help you communicate without arguing, build a relationship that will last, and become a trusted resource your child will turn to for guidance. Come learn the skills you need to enjoy the teen years and parent with confidence.

Class Progression

(Based on age of child on September 1st)

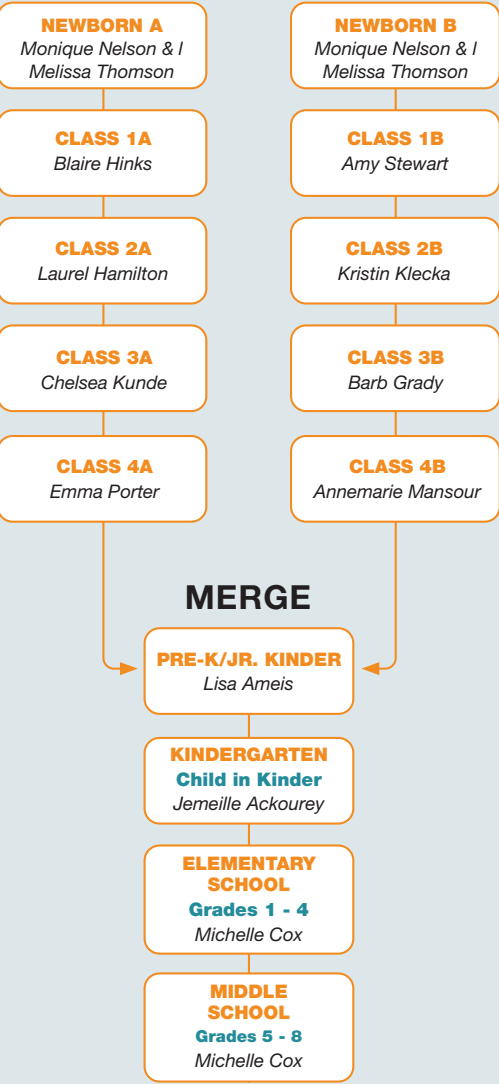
Progression may vary depending on your child's birth date. If your child is the oldest or youngest in a class, you may not follow the same progression as other members.

Member enrollment also affects class progression as the Board strives to have no class be too big or too small.

If you have any questions about your class assignment, please contact membership@ncpgaz.org. We do our best to accommodate requests.

TRACK A

TRACK B



Class 4A will most likely move to Pre-K. Class 4B will most likely split, half to Pre-K, half to Kinder.

Everyone will be placed in the class based on their child's school grade starting in Pre-K..

For all other classes, placement will be based on child's birthday. Track A is September-March and Track B is April-August.

# FALL IN PHOENIX

By Jana Tingom, *Phoenix With Kids*



Fall in Phoenix may still boast 90's temps, but the fall vibe goes strong with some great events! Here's a list of our favorites, as well as other ways to celebrate the changing of the season.

## MACDONALD'S RANCH NORTH SCOTTSDALE

This pumpkin patch is a winner with the petting zoo, pedal cars, gold panning, and more. Very walkable, good for kids 8 and under.

## VERTUCCIO FARMS FALL FESTIVAL MESA

Easily one of our top 5 favorite events in Phoenix. We go every year for the huge air pillows, barrel train ride, corn maze — and new this year is a giant tubing run!

## HALLOWEEN SPOOK-TRAC-ULA SCOTTSDALE

The popular train ride at McCormick Stillman Railroad Park transforms at night to a Halloween themed experience, complete with a light tunnel! While advertised as family friendly (spooky but not frightening) we found it can be frightening depending on the child, so maybe check it out during the day to see if it's a good fit.

## SPOOKTACULAR HOT AIR BALLOON FESTIVAL SCOTTSDALE

Trick-or-treat to dozens of grounded hot air balloons! This event is so unique, and also has bouncy houses and slides for the kids, food trucks, live music, and more.

## MORTIMER FARMS DEWEY

If you're looking for the best pumpkin patch experience outside of Phoenix, it's definitely Mortimer! About 1.5 hours north will bring you slightly cooler temperatures, and a whole host of outdoor activities. Bonus: there are usually still strawberries to pick in early October! Of note, there are more shows and vendors on the weekends vs Monday-Thursday.

## HIKING

The mornings are often cooler in the fall, and it's a perfect time to explore nature spots around Phoenix! Some of our favorite kid friendly hikes are Hole in the Rock at Papago Park, Bajada Nature Trail, and the Reach 11 Barrier Free Nature Trail. You can find dozens of hiking reviews on our blog.

## DAY TRIP

October is the best time to take a day trip and find fall colors! In the Flagstaff area, we love the Hart's Prairie Preserve and Aspen Nature Loop at the AZ Snowbowl (ride the gondola too for the best views!). Other great spots are Crescent Moon Picnic Site in Sedona, and Horton Creek near Payson. Pro tip: keep tabs on the Flagstaff Leaf-o-Meter which has fairly accurate predictions of when colors will be at the peak.

## FALL PARTY

For a simple event at home, host a fall party with friends! Michaels is a great place to get cute fall decor, and fall crafts for kids. Make pumpkin bread or cookies! Have an apple bobbing contest. Or just snuggle on the couch with popcorn and a classic like "It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown".

For a complete list and map of Arizona pumpkin patches, as well as other fun fall events, visit:

[WWW.PHOENIXWITHKIDS.NET/PUMPKIN-PATCHES-IN-PHOENIX](http://WWW.PHOENIXWITHKIDS.NET/PUMPKIN-PATCHES-IN-PHOENIX)

You can also find daily inspiration on our social media at [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PHOENIXWITHKIDS](https://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PHOENIXWITHKIDS) and [WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/PHOENIXWITHKIDS](https://WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/PHOENIXWITHKIDS).



# TEACHER'S CORNER

## Laurel Hamilton 2A

**What is one word you would use to describe your parenting style and why?**

One word to describe my parenting style is patient. I believe behavior is a form of communication and I try to come from a place of curiosity and empathy. What is the emotion behind the behavior? What is he/she trying to express to me? Not just seeing the meltdown and reacting, but seeking to understand, why the meltdown? Taking a pause, co-regulating and giving us both grace are ways that I strive to be patient in my parenting.

**What have you found to be most helpful in developing a strong, deep relationship with your child(ren)?**

I have found being vulnerable and honest to be most helpful in developing a strong, deep relationship with my children. If I'm disappointed in the way I handled a situation or if I've hurt their feelings, I own up to it and apologize. Apologizing doesn't mean we, as parents, are giving away power or showing weakness. It actually demonstrates forgiveness, love and responsibility. I also try to be honest with my emotions and label them. Instead of holding in my feelings of frustration and blowing up, I might say "I am very frustrated right now, so I'm going to take a pause and go in the other room" or "I'm grumpy because I'm tired and hungry, can you give me a little space?" When we model vulnerability and emotional regulation, our children are better equipped to manage their own emotions and empathize with others.

## Melissa Thomson Newborn A & B

**What is one word you would use to describe your parenting style and why?**

That is a tough one! If I had to use just one word, it would be responsive. I always want my daughters to be able to feel heard and validated.

**What have you found to be most helpful in developing a strong, deep relationship with your child(ren)?**

Setting time aside to read to them daily. They have never refused a book. It allows us to connect and have conversations about whatever we may be reading, without any distractions.




**If you can dream it.  
We can design it.**

*What will you create?*


 SCHMITT JEWELERS

4402 E. Camelback Rd. | [SchmittJewelers.com](http://SchmittJewelers.com) | (602) 840-1144



**CHRIST CHURCH SCHOOL**  
PRESCHOOL-ELEMENTARY

**CLASSES FOR TODDLERS THROUGH 4TH GRADE  
COME LEARN WITH US!**



**ccsaz.org**

**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE  
ENRICHED BY FAITH**

4015 E. Lincoln Drive, Paradise Valley  
602.381.9906 • [info@ccsaz.org](mailto:info@ccsaz.org)

**IDEA SOURCE**

*Providing Ideas ▶ Creating Solutions*



**The ONE source for silkscreen, embroidery  
and all things logoed!**

**IdeaSourcePromotions.com**

**10% OFF ORDER WITH CODE NCPG**  
Email NCPG mom: [ashley@ideasourceinc.com](mailto:ashley@ideasourceinc.com)

**Princeton Construction**

COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL, & SERVICE

**AT PRINCETON CONSTRUCTION CUSTOMER SERVICE, SATISFACTION, AND OVERALL VALUE IS OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY AND WE STAND BEHIND OUR WORK.**

**WE ARE A LOCAL PHOENIX COMPANY AND STRIVE TO FOSTER AND MAINTAIN LASTING RELATIONSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE VALLEY WITH CLIENTS, SUBCONTRACTORS, AND VENDORS.**

4112 E. INDIAN SCHOOL ROAD  
PHOENIX, AZ 85018  
(602) 603-1102  
[WWW.PRINCETONAZ.COM](http://WWW.PRINCETONAZ.COM)  
AZ ROC # 275988

**\*\* FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED BY NCPG MEMBER \*\***

# Recipe: Butternut Squash and Black Bean Enchiladas

<https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a32947790/butternut-squash-and-black-bean-enchiladas-recipe/>

These delicious vegetarian enchiladas are sure to shake up your family's weeknight dinners.

**PREP:** 45 Min  
**TOTAL TIME:** 1:45 Min  
**YIELD:** 6-8 Servings

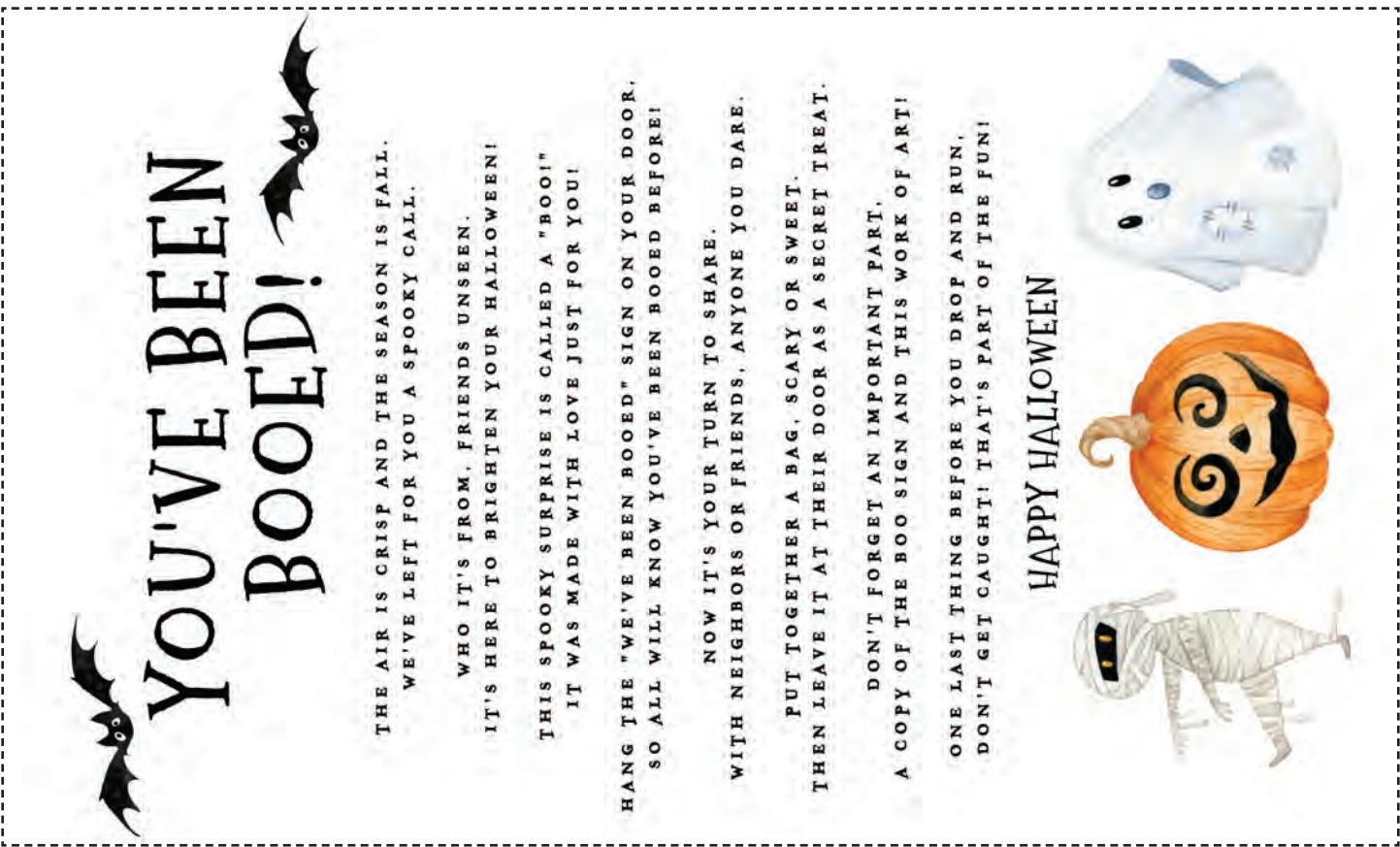
### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into 2 1/2 x 1/2-inch sticks
- 1/4 c. vegetable oil
- 3/4 tsp. ground cumin
- 3/4 tsp. chili powder, plus more sprinkling
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- Black pepper, to taste
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 15-ounce cans green enchilada sauce
- 16 corn tortillas
- 3 c. grated monterey jack or pepper jack cheese (about 12 ounces)
- Chopped fresh cilantro, for topping



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°. Toss the squash, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, 1/2 teaspoon each cumin and chili powder, the salt and several grinds of pepper on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast, tossing once, until browned and tender but not falling apart, 25 to 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring it around, until lightly browned and tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the black beans and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon each cumin and chili powder. Cook until the beans are heated through and well combined, about 2 minutes. Remove from the pan and set aside on a plate. Pour the enchilada sauce into the skillet, reduce the heat to low and warm through.
3. One at a time, hold the tortillas over a stovetop burner over medium heat to brown slightly, about 30 seconds per side. Set aside.
4. Pour 2 cups of the enchilada sauce into a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. To assemble the enchiladas, dip a tortilla into the remaining sauce, then lay on a plate. Sprinkle some cheese down the middle, followed by some of the bean mixture and finally some of the roasted squash. Roll it up tightly, then place seam-side down in the baking dish. Repeat with the rest of the tortillas. If you have any extra pieces of squash, tuck them in between the enchiladas. Be sure to save a little cheese for topping!
5. Pour the rest of the sauce over the enchiladas, then top with the remaining cheese. Give it a final sprinkling of chili powder, then bake until hot and bubbly, 20 to 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and let sit 15 to 20 minutes before serving. Top with cilantro.



**YOU'VE BEEN BOOED!** Cut out these cute notes and share some Halloween fun with your friends and neighbors!





*New!*

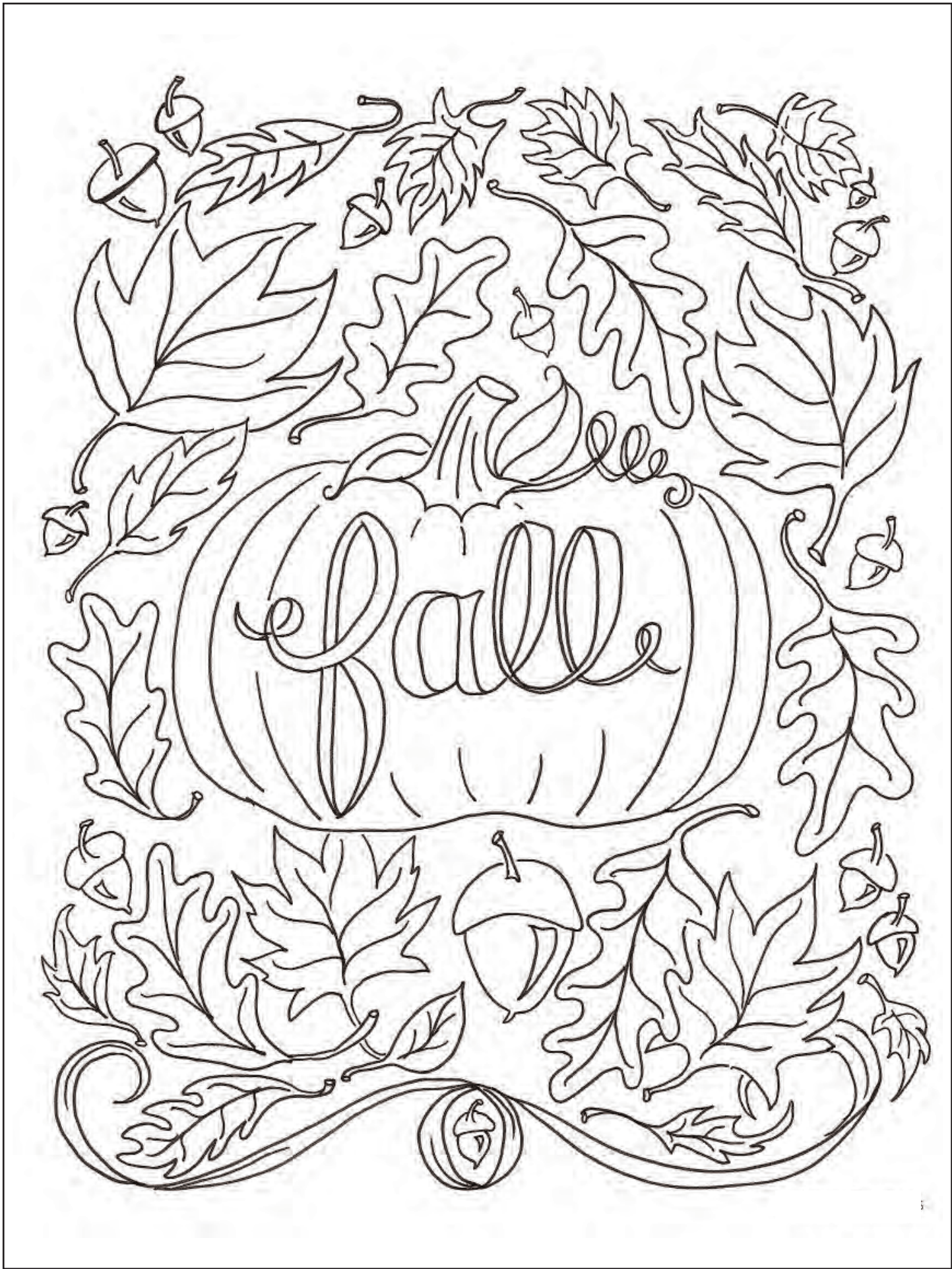
# NCPG COLORING CONTEST

Introducing NCPG's coloring pages on the following pages. Check out each issue for some fun. We would love to feature your "artists" in the upcoming *Parent Times*!

Snap a pic of your cutie's masterpiece and email it to [communications@ncpgaz.org](mailto:communications@ncpgaz.org) by **October 12th**.

Please include your name and your child's name and age in the email to see if they will be featured in the next issue. HAPPY COLORING!





# Thank You to Our 2022-2023 Sponsors

## PLATINUM



## GOLD



## BRONZE

IdeaSourcePromotions.com

