

Parent Times

December 2019



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President's Corner

Happy Holidays!

I am completely in awe of your incredible generosity and overwhelming holiday spirit, THANK YOU! With our **Salvation Army** donations dropped off today, I have no doubt that we will again be a Top 3 contributor this year, providing gifts to children that may not otherwise experience new toys this holiday season. As a nonprofit organization educating parents, the NCPG Board of Directors truly feels this is such a special way for NCPG to make an impact in not only the recipients' lives, but also in the lives of our own children.

Today is our last class of 2019 (and of this decade) — can you believe it?! I hope everyone has benefitted from this amazing community and gained a sense of support from our classes. Our amazing teachers, generous sponsors, and welcoming members have cultivated such an enriching environment. As a testament to your dedication and appreciation of NCPG, our Membership is almost full with only a handful of spots remaining in a few classes. Thank you for continuing to refer your friends and spreading the word about NCPG to anyone you feel could also benefit from such a phenomenal resource. Please reach out to membership@ncpgaz.org with any questions or inquiries.

A special 'thank you' to our **Special Events Directors** for planning such an amazing All Class Play Date last week at the **Children's Museum of Phoenix** (and to **Deanna Sheedy**, a current NCPG member and Children's Museum of Phoenix board member, for generously donating the private event to NCPG)! It was so much fun to be together and such a great way to socialize outside of the classroom. As we close out 2019, the Board is well under way planning our calendar for Spring 2020. **Please save the date for our Spring Gala at Arizona Country Club on Saturday, March 7**, and look for the dates of our spring play date and festival to be announced soon!

Lastly, there are so many ways to get involved with NCPG! We always need help on committees, and it's time to start thinking about Board positions for next year. If you are interested, **please join us on Monday, January 6, 2020 at 6:30pm for our Board & Bites informational session (prior to our January Board meeting) at Christ Church School (in the Parish Hall) on Lincoln Drive**. We sincerely appreciate your support and welcome your feedback throughout the year as we strive to make this our best year yet! Please reach out anytime — I am here as a resource and would love to hear from you.

Wishing each of you and your families a safe, joyful, and happy holiday! See everyone back for our first class of the new year on **Wednesday, January 8, 2020**.

xo,

Megan Anderson Garvey
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.

ncpg

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!

Editors – Kelly Anderson & Colleen Fillion

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Front Cover – Finn & Ascher Van Der Werf

Photographer: Natalie Ryan Photography



Member to Meet Asia Colling

Class: School A

Children & Ages: Jack, age 7 and Dylan, age 5

Spouse: Craig Colling

How did you meet your spouse:

We've known each other since high school and started dating in college.

Years married/together:

Married for 11 years, known each other for 21 years.

Spouse/partners favorite date night spot:

Either Hillstone or Buck & Rider.

Career or previous career:

I've always been in sales. First wine, then pharmaceuticals, then skin care, and now houses.

Favorite family vacation spot?

Anywhere on a beach in Mexico...

Favorite family spot to dine in town?

Lou's is such a great family spot with a casual atmosphere and nice views.

Do you have a hidden talent?

I speak Polish. Not a super useful language here in AZ, but it's nice to be bilingual.

Where were you born and raised?

Born in Hamburg, Germany but raised in Phoenix.

What's your favorite thing to do with your child/children?

We love an impromptu dance party!

What is your favorite family tradition?

We've been going to A Winnie the Pooh Christmas Tale at Valley Youth Theatre since my son was 2. It's such a great way to get into the Christmas spirit!

Best parenting advice given to you?

That your child is who they are meant to be.

How do you balance meeting your children's needs as well as your own?

Now that they are both in school full time, it is much easier. You really have to utilize those few hours of freedom wisely!

If you could give your pre-baby self advice, what would it be?

Buy the shoes, stay for another drink and enjoy your weekends!

Who introduced you to NCPG and for how many years have you been a part of the group?

Colleen Martin raved about NCPG. When we moved I finally joined, and I'm so glad I did.

Best thing learned in NCPG?

It's simple, but such a good reminder; we need to model the behaviors that we want our children to emulate. Jemeille triggered many aha moments for me last year.

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Your Child's Next Milestone: Potty Training!

Article courtesy of Beatriz Orr, SARRC Community School

It probably seems like just yesterday you were changing your child's first diaper and now you're wondering if it's time for one of the biggest milestones in your child's development: potty training. There's no exact age in which all children are ready for potty training, but you can expect to see some emerging readiness signs starting as early as age 24 months to 40 months.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS READY?

Your child may show signs of interest in the toilet, and they may not. Every child is different, but here are some common signs that may indicate your child is ready:

- Noticing when they are wet
- Waking up dry
- Showing an interest in the toilet

If the answer is yes, great! But if the answer is no to some or all of these, that's okay too. Here are some ideas you can implement to help their potty-training journey along:

Tip 1: Change all diapers in the bathroom so your child gets used to this environment. (And, if your child likes flushing the toilet, consider allowing them to flush to signify you're finished!)

Tip 2: Have your child practice pulling their own pants up and down. (Looser pants that have easy elastic waistlines are perfect for this!)

Tip 3: Have your child practice sitting on the toilet. (Do something fun with them like singing, reading or looking at favorite family photos!)

PRACTICING POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT AND INTRODUCING REWARDS

Rewards might help motivate your child to keep practicing toilet preparedness and help establish the connection between bodily functions and the toilet.

Have your child help choose their reward to make it more engaging and exciting when they use the toilet. (A fun trip to the dollar store can help prepare and build excitement!) Include prizes that are interactive. For example, a quick game of chase or a silly song. The key is providing something your child likes and values when they try to use the toilet, and something super special when they are successful to encourage more motivation.



YOU'RE READY, WHAT'S NEXT?

So, your child is ready to conquer the toilet! You've mastered the fundamentals, but how do you instill confidence in your little one as they master potty training once and for all?

Invest in a toilet seat adapter. This can make your child feel comfortable while using the grown-up toilet without the fear of falling in while practicing a standard toilet. Set a timer. In the beginning, have your child sit on the toilet once or twice an hour. During these bathroom visits, throw a fruit loop in and let your child flush it, whether they went or not.

Notice the signs. If you see your child grabbing their diaper, squirming or squatting, take your child to the bathroom—quickly!

Bon voyage to diapers! It's critical to switch to underwear to give your child clear expectations. But it's okay to continue using diapers for naps and overnight until your child consistently wakes up dry.

CELEBRATE THE SUCCESSES

Remember, your child may continue to have accidents before they are completely ready to conquer the toilet on their own. Patience is key. Potty training is a big step for little ones and can be a lengthy process. Don't forget to celebrate the little successes along the way: from a simple flush, to practice using the toilet, waking up dry, or them letting you know they need to use the toilet. These are all milestone moments that will help you and your child to potty training success!

About the author: Beatriz Orr, is a licensed board certified behavior analyst and is the director of the SARRC Community School with campuses located both in central Phoenix and Tempe, Arizona. The SARRC Community School is a preschool program that follows an inclusion model, which provides high-quality early childhood education, and ABA-based programming for pre-school aged children with autism spectrum disorder as well as typically developing children. Toddlers as young as 15 months to children up to 6 years old experience important social and academic fundamentals to ensure kindergarten readiness. The Community School uses a 4-to-1 student-teacher ratio, paired with a detailed, highly individualized learning plan for each student.

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WHEN YOUR KIDS HELP DECORATE THE TREE.

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Me: If you guys don't change your behavior you're not going to get any presents.

Narrator: Regardless of their behavior, the children would get all the presents. They knew it, she knew it, we all knew it.

Dinnertime just got a whole lot easier!



With **Sunfare Family Dinners**, you can get wholesome, tasty, and family-friendly meals that are made fresh and delivered right to your door, ready-to-eat.

Back in 1997, when Sunfare first opened their doors, their entire business model was predicated on convenience. That is, in spite people's best intentions when it comes to eating right, they often don't have the time, energy, or know-how to turn those intentions into reality. Sound familiar?

"Before Sunfare, my partner and I ran a personal training business, where we'd also provide our clients with a detailed nutrition plan. We soon discovered that while they wanted to follow a healthy diet, they just didn't have the bandwidth to plan, shop, prep, and cook the meals we were recommending. That was our 'ah-ha' moment, and we were in business shortly after that," says John Stewart, Sunfare's CEO and co-founder.

Sunfare soon became the most sought-after meal prep and delivery business in Los Angeles. With a reputation for serving Hollywood's biggest names, they gained a following that first

saw them expand across Los Angeles and then, in 2004, move into Phoenix and deliver meals valley-wide.

But it wasn't until 2016, soon after Stewart started a family, that Family Dinners started to take form.

"Since the kids, we're constantly scrambling to get a good quality meal on the table. Like everyone else, we're always pressed for time and dinner can be a source of stress. But it doesn't have to be. I'd rather come home knowing our evening meal is already taken care of and made from really healthy, high-end ingredients so we can relax. That's our Family Dinners program in a nutshell," offers Stewart.

Leaning on past experience, Sunfare looked at Dinners through the familiar lens of easing the

burden of meal preparation. But they also paid close attention to the popularity of meal kits, embracing the idea that people want fresh, tasty meals with manageable portion sizes, but rejecting the notion that still having to cook and clean up is considered a convenience. Ultimately, their Dinners program provides the best of both worlds: healthy, delicious food

that's delivered ready-to-eat, making ease of preparation central to the experience.

Family Dinners start simply. Each serves between two and five people, is composed of a main entrée and one to two sides, and is comprised of all-natural/organic

ingredients. Variety is a priority, so there's always a nice range of tasty alternate choices available, including gluten free and plant-based. In addition, ingredients you dislike can be withheld from your dinners so you're never served something that disagrees with your palette or dietary profile.

Typical of Sunfare, fun added features take this program even one step further. Dinners can also be outfitted with 'extras,' which are additional items that can be ordered in conjunction with each dinner. Extras include the obvious items like appetizers, side salads, and desserts, but also offer grill your own proteins, deli meats and cheeses, kid's meals, and more. They can even be made to recur each week (think fresh fruit delivered every Monday and tacos every Tuesday, automatically) to make things that much more effortless.

"We encourage people to order one, two, maybe three dinners a week. A dinner for two with an appetizer and a couple of kids' meals makes for a very nice evening. I really hope people find this program to be as beneficial as we have."

Family Dinners start at \$35.95 a day for two and are available in Phoenix only. Order and learn more at www.sunfare.com or by calling **623.582.0588**.

Article courtesy of Sunfare.



2020 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	Pre-Infant & Pre-Teen Class

Class Dates

January 8th	March 4th **
January 22nd	April 8th **
February 5th **	April 22nd
February 19th	May 6th **

**Parent Times magazine distributed.

Board Meeting Schedule

January 6th
February 10th
March 2nd
April 6th
May 4th

Saint Barnabas on the Desert Episcopal Church

6715 N. Mockingbird Lane
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253



Board Announcements

Treasury

NCPG continues to offer scholarship opportunities for both membership and nursery dues.

For more information please contact: treasurer@ncpgaz.org

Membership

We still have space in a few of our classes for the 2020 year. Please contact membership@ncpgaz.org or check the website for availability!

Communications

WE WANT YOUR PICTURES!

Next month's theme for *Parent Times* is:

HOLIDAY CHEER!

Send us your high-resolution photos from all your fun holiday activities. Who knows — your child might wind up on the cover!

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



Public Relations



Our private **NCPG Instagram** page [@ncpgaz](https://www.instagram.com/ncpgaz) is live! Please request to join this new account. Thanks!



Please continue to use the members only **NCPG 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: [ncpgaz](https://www.facebook.com/ncpgaz)

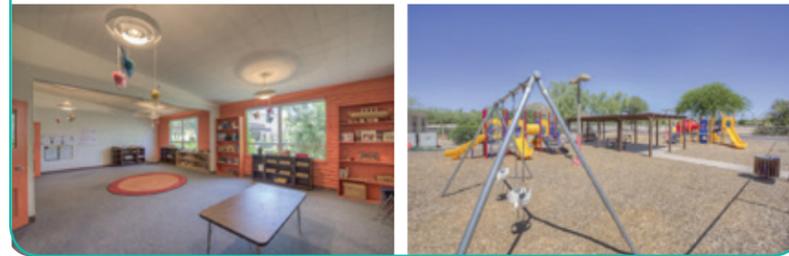
Childcare

Childcare signup starts the Thursday morning after class. Please book early as our childcare does fill up! Just a reminder that we can not accommodate day of class drop ins or refunds. If you have any questions, please contact Childcare via email: childcare@ncpgaz.org



Our nursery is a "nut free zone" so please be mindful when you pack snacks for your little ones.

For more information on our childcare please review on our website at www.ncpgaz.org/childcare



SAVE THE DATE:

Board & Bites, Jan 6 - 6:30pm

Please join us for an informational session on Committees and Board positions (prior to our January Board meeting) at Christ Church School (in the Parish Hall) on Lincoln Drive.

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

SAVE THE DATE!

SPRING GALA

Saturday, March 7
Arizona Country Club

More details to come!!



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Please let all your friends and family members know about it!



STUDY: Close Grandparent-Grandchild Relationships Have Healthy Benefits

By Ami Albernaz, Globe Correspondent

An overwhelming amount of psychology and social science research is devoted to parent-child dynamics. But even in our nuclear-family age, that's not the only bond children have with adults. In the last year, significant new findings have emerged to shed light on the important benefits of children's relationships with their grandparents — for the people on both sides of the equation.

A study by Boston College researchers found that emotionally close ties between grandparents and adult grandchildren reduced depressive symptoms in both groups. The study, published online last year in the journal *The Gerontologist*, included 374 grandparents and 356 adult grandchildren who were taking part in a larger study. The researchers looked at data collected over a 19-year period.

Close grandparent-grandchild relationships are often a marker of strong family ties overall, but these intergenerational bonds also come with their own distinctive benefits, said lead author Sara Moorman, an associate professor of sociology at Boston College. As people are living longer, these bonds are becoming even more important.

For grandparents, relationships with grandchildren provide connection with a much younger generation and exposure to different ideas, which might otherwise be limited. For grandkids, grandparents can offer life wisdom that they can put into practice as they navigate young adulthood.

“Grandparents have a wealth of experience — they’ll often tell stories about their lives and how things worked when they were young, and once kids become adults, they’re able to maximize those lessons,” said Moorman, who said her study is a tribute to her own grandmother. Grandparents also can offer their grandchildren a first-hand historical perspective that enriches their lives and understanding of the past.

Earlier research has shown links between strong grandparent-grandchild bonds and adjustment and pro-social behavior among kids. A study of English children ages 11-16, for instance, found that close grandparent-grandchild relationships were associated with benefits including fewer emotional and behavioral problems and fewer difficulties with peers. These relationships also helped to reduce the adverse impacts of experiences such as parent breakups and being bullied.

For grandparents, involvement with grandchildren may help to keep them mentally sharp. An Australian study published earlier this year found that grandmothers who spent time watching their grandkids performed better on cognitive tests than did grandmothers who didn't, and than women who didn't have grandchildren. (Interestingly, though, minding grandkids one day per week was linked to better test performance than watching them more often.)

Of course, relationships between grandparents and grandchildren are shaped by the larger family context. A study of Israeli teens published in September found that the closer teens were with their parents, the more they benefited from strong relationships with their grandparents. Specifically, among teens who reported being very close to their parents, strong bonds with grandparents were more effective in reducing emotional and behavioral problems.

Grandparents tend to complement good-quality relationships with parents, and both of these relationships reduce adjustment difficulties in adolescents, study author Shalhevet Attar-Schwartz of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem said in an e-mail. Because parents bridge the generation gap between grandparents and grandchildren, they help to shape these relationships and can influence the strength of grandparent-grandchild bond.

“Parents should be aware of their role as gatekeepers in the relationship between their children and their parents,” Attar-Schwartz said. “They should also be aware of grandparents’ potential to be an important resource in their children’s lives, especially if the family is undergoing a change, such as divorce or remarriage, or if the child is undergoing a painful or challenging experience. . . . Sometimes children feel that it is easier to open up to their grandparents and share their difficulties and dilemmas with them.”





School Choices



Amy

Blair

Lesley

Help! I'm overwhelmed with the school choices we have today! What did you think was important when choosing an elementary school for your children? Looking back would you chose the same school or do you now realize other importance's that make the "right school"

Amy Stewart - 1A

- Research the school's core values and mission statement and see if they align with your family values.
- Interview the school administration with questions like: What is the school's focus? How do they balance academics with fun? How do they correct behavior? What is their policy with bullying?
- Do not overthink it. Trust your instincts.

Blaire Hinks - 1B

The community that the school creates is a big deal. Is it inclusive and nurturing? Do they look at the child as a whole and not a test score? Do they invest in the social emotional side of the child and not just academic? I want a well-rounded academic experience for my children, not just getting good at math facts and taking tests. I happen to have attended the schools that my kids go to.

Lesley Isaak - 4B

I think it's very easy to get overwhelmed when choosing schools. We have so many options today...maybe too many! Some of us have children who need extra support or special accommodations, so of course that would be top on the priority list, to find a place that meets your child's specific needs. When I shopped around, I also wanted to make sure our chosen school was somewhat convenient to home, as there were always days when we were running behind or had forgotten something important at home (despite our best efforts). I didn't want to have to race all the way across town! Other things I kept in mind included finding out if volunteer hours were expected from each family, and if not, what were the policies on allowing parents to come in and help out. I loved being involved in my children's school experience, and

especially enjoyed seeing first-hand what a day in the class environment was like for them. Of course, school size was also a factor to consider.

I guess an important piece for me was spending a little time on the school campus first, so I could get the general "vibe." I observed the dynamic among teachers, the parents, the kids, the office staff. I'm not saying all of those things have to be perfect, but it needs to feel comfortable for me and for my child. During that process, I also had to be aware that my judgements of these schools were strongly influenced by where I went to elementary school — because that shaped my opinion of how a school should be.

I am happy with our elementary school choice, but can also see now that we would have made the most of the experience at any school we chose!

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#Real "Mom"ents

My "most sleep-deprived moment" was with my first baby, 6 or so weeks old. Change pee diaper, snap onesie and she's still crying ... next to me sits a clean diaper! Yes, I took the old diaper off, got a new one and put the old diaper back on. 'Mommy of the Year' Award. LOL"

~ Anonymous

Have a Funny Mom Story You Want to Share?

Please send us your funny or real MOMent to communications@ncpgaz.org and feel free to submit anonymously or share your name & class!

Where Does a Tomato Come From?

Article courtesy of All Saints' Episcopal Day School



Where does a tomato come from? If your child answers, "The grocery store!" it's time to start planting. Picky eater? Start planting! Future scientist or engineer? Start planting!

Research shows children care more about food and nutrition when they take part in meal preparation. It follows then that they will be even more connected if they are part of the growing process too. It's never too early or late to start. And in Phoenix, you can garden all year long, in a bed, a pot, or even on the window.

As a pre-kindergarten teacher at All Saints' Episcopal Day School, I brought my gardening expertise when I arrived in July of 2018 from an independent school in Rhode Island. There, I was the coordinator of a 10,000 sq. ft. garden classroom. At All Saints', our first classroom dabble in the garden was with raised beds. We picked a variety of foods (some familiar, some not) and plants that produce under the dirt, in a bush, on a vine, and standing tall. We also planted flowers to attract birds, bees, and butterflies. We started a little late and didn't get a huge harvest. What we did get was 25 children eager to care for their plants and curious about plant growth, making intelligent, well-thought-out predictions about what would happen in the coming weeks. We also got 25 children excited to taste radishes, peas, beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, and corn!

Now we're prepared. After a course at Columbia's Teachers College this past summer, I became more convinced that teaching food and nutrition to young children is vital. It's fun and can be a strong connection for you and your child(ren). Start with books, add art and science. Visit the farmers market and garden shops. It's an adventure—not just a single product—and the process is where learning takes place.

Start with some books:

- Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt** | Kate Messner and Christopher Silas Neal
- We are the Gardeners** | Joanna Gaines and Julianna Swaney
- Lola Plants a Garden** | Anna McQuinn and Rodsalind Beardshaw
- The Surprise Garden** | Zoe Hall and Shari Halpern
- Seeds! Seeds! Seeds!** | Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

Get growing!

At All Saints' we started in the classroom, using baggies with paper towels inside to germinate the seeds. The budget-friendly terrariums were sealed shut and taped on the window at the right height to get the sun, and so that little eyes could watch. Children made predictions, which, after our reading, were spot-on. After the seeds had sprouted, we moved the plants to containers outside. Some went into raised beds, some into pots. Containers (plant pots, milk jugs, etc.) are ideal for tomatoes, herbs, and climbing peas. If you don't know what or when to plant, there are many online resources.

Here's an easy-to-follow planting guide for Maricopa County.
<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/pubs/az1005.pdf>

Add art, writing, and science.

Make observation journals. Have your child draw or write weekly about the changes happening in your garden. Paint a still life. Photograph the farmers market or grocery store—get up close and personal with the flowers and vegetables. Dissect fruits and vegetables to find seeds, and grow new plants from things in your fridge. Show your child how plants get their nutrition by putting white flowers in food coloring and water. I do these things and more in my classroom at All Saints', and you can do them at home without much energy or expense. The possibilities are endless.

What if there's an unexpected outcome?

Did your plants die? Little to harvest? It's about the process. You're reading together, planning together, tending together, making predictions, and harvesting. If you get one tomato and one flower, celebrate! Put that flower in a vase on your table and share that tomato as if it were a gourmet dinner at the finest restaurant in Phoenix. The beauty of living here is that you don't have to wait a full year to do it again. Check your planting guide and start again! You're strengthening bonds, creating memories, and laying a foundation that will have a lasting impact.

Happy gardening!

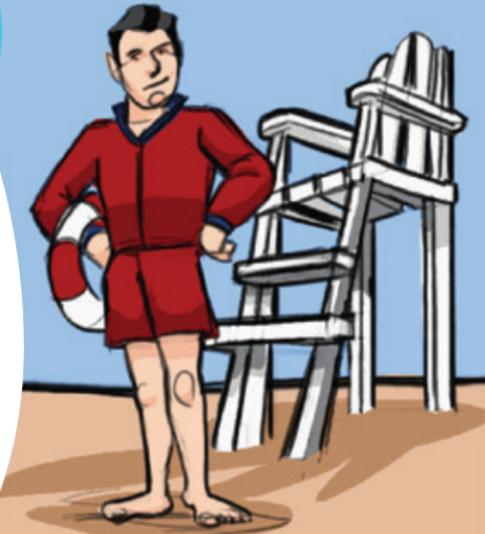
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We invite you to visit our campus, nestled in the heart of North Central Phoenix, to learn about the All Saints' community. The best way to become familiar with everything All Saints' has to offer is through a campus visit during an Open House or call 602.274.4866 to schedule a private tour.

- ✔ Tour the campus with a Parent Ambassador
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- ✔ Meet with administrators and faculty
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FEB 01

Admissions Decisions Announced in Early
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WE'VE GOT TO KEEP MEETING LIKE THIS!

Article courtesy of Schmitt Jewelers

Yes, REALLY, every six months! It may sound like a lot of visits to your jeweler, but think about what your jewelry goes through in six months....1,450 hand-washings, 336 loads of laundry, making school lunches, deadheading geraniums, changing diapers...need we say more? Your jewelry gets a work out and needs regular inspections and cleaning. Here are a few reasons why it's a good idea to have a close relationship with your jeweler:

WEAR AND TEAR

Like the cars that we drive on a daily basis, we put a lot of 'miles' on our jewelry every day. Which is not a bad thing; wear the jewelry you love everyday and enjoy it! Jewelry is made to be worn, but your items do need to be inspected by a professional regularly to keep them in tip top condition and to avoid costly losses or damage.

Your jewelry is made out of metal and/or gemstones. While these materials are fairly hearty, they can still wear and break over time — and they often will. Just like an automobile, wear and tear is part of a piece of jewelry's lifespan. Some jewelry will last literally a lifetime, yet other pieces may only last a handful of years based on the material they are constructed of and the type of wear they receive. The metal and stones in your jewelry get bumped, knocked around and come in contact with a variety of substances in the regular course of a day, so it's a wise decision to have them inspected regularly.

JEWELRY SERVICING

Your car needs regular service and maintenance, and so does your jewelry! Metal tips and prongs should be checked every six months to ensure that your gemstones are secure, and the gemstones themselves need to be inspected to determine if there is any damage or wear that needs to be addressed. Your jeweler will advise you as to whether a repair needs to be completed immediately or if it can wait a few months. It's often easier to correct a small issue while it's small, rather than wait until the issue becomes larger and possibly more expensive.

MINDFUL CARE

Jewelry comes in all shapes and sizes, colors and styles. Like clothing, some jewelry styles simply wear better (and longer) than others. A delicate, thin ring will wear more quickly than a chunkier style. And the way you wear your jewelry also affects how often it needs repair or replacement. Here are a few tips on how best to wear — and not to wear — your jewelry:

- Remove your jewelry before you shower or bathe. The chemicals in your soap, shampoo and conditioner can take a toll on your jewelry, as well as the extra wear the jewelry receives while bathing.
- Choose not to sleep with your jewelry; we know you love it, but the tossing and turning you do in your sleep can translate to 'excessive wear' for your pieces, thus shortening their life span.
- Store jewelry pieces separately to avoid knotting and tangling.
- Leave your jewelry at home during your work out. Gym weights and equipment can be tough on your items.
- Last but not least, visit your jeweler AT LEAST every six months. They're ALWAYS happy to see you, and your jewelry



Photo by chuttersnap on Unsplash.

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How to help kids learn to love giving

Five science-based strategies for the holidays (and the rest of the year).

By Jason Marsh: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_help_kids_learn_to_love_giving

During the holidays, opportunities abound to help kids understand why and how to help people in need, with food drives proliferating and countless organizations making pitches for end-of-year donations.

And there's scientific evidence that kids should be receptive to those messages: Research suggests that they have a deeply rooted instinct to share and to help others, from the time they're very young—one study even found that toddlers enjoy giving to others more than they like getting treats for themselves. Kids, it seems, have a strong, natural drive to be kind and generous.

Except for my daughter.

Or so it seemed last year, when my wife and I tried to involve her in our annual practice of selecting organizations to support with a charitable gift around the holidays. Our then-seven-year-old wasn't having it—not interested, end of story.

Clearly, there were two possible explanations: She was an exceptionally selfish human being, or I had failed as a parent. Probably both.

I knew that wasn't true, of course. My daughter had always amazed us with the care and compassion she'd extended to most everyone, from younger neighbors to classmates to characters in her favorite TV shows. But I couldn't shake the feeling that I must have been doing something wrong. How could this obviously caring kid seem so apathetic when it came time to put her (or our) money where her mouth is?

I know from my years working at the Greater Good Science Center that the key lies in nurturing her inner motivation for generosity—it has to be something she wants to do herself, not sees as a chore

imposed on her by an outside force (like an anxious parent). Giving, in other words, has to feel good.

"I think helping our kids experience the happiness that comes from giving to others is probably one of the most valuable ways we can nurture generosity in them," says Lara Aknin, an assistant professor of psychology at Simon Fraser University in Canada (and the one who led the study suggesting that giving makes toddlers happier than getting). "It sets off this positive cycle: Giving makes people happy and happiness promotes giving."

So how can we make sure that giving feels good for kids and launches this "positive cycle" of happiness and generosity? I turned to experts for guidance, determined for things to be different with my own kid this holiday season. While they stressed that research on this topic is far from complete, there are science-based strategies for nurturing kids' altruistic instincts around the holidays and all year round. Here are five lessons I took away from our conversations.

1. Be a role model—and explain why you do what you do

Research stretching back decades has found that kids are more likely to be kind and generous when they have at least one parent who models that behavior for them. But more recently, research by Mark Ottoni-Wilhelm of Indiana University has underscored that it's also important for parents to have conversations with their kids about generosity.

One study led by Ottoni-Wilhelm found that adolescents were 18 percent more likely to donate money to a charitable organization if

their parents had made any donation of their own in the past year. But if a parent had made a donation and talked with their child about giving, that kid was 33 percent more likely to donate—an increase of 15 percentage points. Similarly, adolescents whose parent did volunteer work were 27 percent more likely to volunteer themselves—and 47 percent more likely if their parent also talked with them about generosity.

"I think we assume that actions speak louder than words," says Sara Konrath, an assistant professor of philanthropic studies at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. "But in the case of this particular behavior, it seems like you need both together to effectively teach your children generosity."

The experts stress that those conversations can and should start early, well before adolescence. Jill Gordon, director of the Youth Philanthropy Initiative of Indiana (YPII), says that her organization has started to offer programs for children—and their caregivers—as young as three years old, educating them about the various ways they can help others and contribute to their communities. She believes it's almost never too early for parents to start having those conversations, whether around the dinner table or in the car. "You can say, 'Your mom (or dad) and I support these organizations, and here's why,'" she suggests.

Especially in these early conversations, parents don't need to explicitly encourage their kids to donate time or money—just raising awareness about the parents' own actions is an important first step. Gordon has found that those conversations really start to "sink in" around the age of eight—my daughter's age, and also the youngest age some research looks at when examining whether kids give to charity. So perhaps my concerns last year might have been a bit premature.

2. Help them understand the need

For kids to feel compelled to help others, first they have to recognize that their help is actually needed.

Here parents can tap into kids' strong propensity for empathy—evident in the earliest stages of life—which enables them to pick up on the emotions and needs of others. Studies suggest that kids are more likely to help people in need when they try to see the world through their eyes or identify things they have in common. A personal, human connection to someone makes that person's needs feel more real, harder to ignore, and thus motivates us to alleviate his or her suffering.

"I think that's one of the most basic things that empathy can do: Alert us to the needs of others and make us motivated to fix them in whatever way possible," says Kiley Hamlin, a developmental psychologist at the University of British Columbia. Rather than shying away from a person in need, parents can gently encourage their kids to think about that person's history and experiences.

Or even better, suggests Konrath, they can look for ways to interact with the people they're helping. Konrath's kids, ages seven and four, recently donated socks to a local homeless shelter. But even after taking that step, she thinks the idea of "homelessness" might remain an abstract concept for kids their age.

"But talking to actual people and getting to know them," she says, "changes them from a group of people that kids don't really under-

stand to real people with names and stories and families that they can understand."

Jill Gordon has found that by the time children reach five or six years old, it's productive to start asking them questions about where they see needs in their community. "Maybe that means having an early conversation about homelessness and food hunger," she says. "There aren't a lot of supermarkets in this neighborhood—where do you think people get their food?"

By the time students reach fourth or fifth grade, Gordon says, they have the critical thinking and organizational skills to consider bigger actions that they could take to help address those needs, such as organizing fundraisers or service projects, and they can better understand which organizations in their community are meeting those needs.

3. Help them see the impact

A significant finding from studies of adults is that they'll derive greater happiness from their generosity—and thus be more motivated to give again—if they're able to see the impact it has on others. Aknin told me she has seen the same thing play out in her research with kids. In her study of toddlers, she believes they seemed to enjoy giving a treat (Goldfish crackers) more than receiving one because they got to see the recipient of their generosity—a monkey puppet—enjoy their gift right then and there. "They saw exactly how they were giving, and how it was beneficial," she says.

But the same usually can't be said for monetary donations. In fact, when kids are younger—roughly until the age of five, according to Hamlin—the whole concept of money is pretty hazy and abstract. So even when they are interested in helping other people, it's very hard for them to wrap their heads around the benefits of donating money to a cause.

That's why Aknin suggests involving younger kids—like her own two-year-old son—in forms of charity where they can make a more tangible connection between their actions and their positive impact. For instance, she believes taking them to the grocery store to pick out some nutritious items, then delivering those items to a food bank, will make a greater impression on them than "just setting aside a couple of dollars which, in theory, will go to help others but is not as tangible or concrete."

As kids get older, perhaps starting around the age of six, Aknin and Hamlin both suggested engaging them in altruistic acts where they can see the impact of their work up close—like by volunteering at a soup kitchen or nursing home, or by helping to clean up a local park—especially if it involves forming strong social connections with the people they help or with fellow volunteers.

And when kids are old enough to grasp the concept of money, there are ways parents can help them appreciate the impact of charitable donations. After Sara Konrath made a donation recently to her local homeless shelter, she showed her seven-year-old daughter the letter of thanks that she received from the shelter, which included stories of people it was serving.

"I told her, 'That organization needs money in order to run, and we're sharing our money with them so they can help these people,'" she says. "She really got it. And hopefully one day she'll remember that and want to make her own contribution."

Continued >>>

4. Make it part of who they are

For Konrath's daughter, making her own contribution might be a key to building a lasting habit of generosity: Recent research suggests that when people give away something that has greater personal meaning or significance to themselves, they actually feel more committed to the cause they're supporting and are more likely to keep supporting that cause down the line.

This resonates with Jill Gordon's approach at YPII, where they encourage youth to think about philanthropy not only as volunteering their time or donating their money but also as a way to use their personal talents for the greater good.

"Giving and serving, being philanthropic—it doesn't need to be a separate part of your life," she says. "It can be part of your identity, part of the activities you're already passionate about. If you're into the arts, let's find a way that you can use those talents. If you're into sports, maybe you can organize a drive to give away sports equipment."

The more philanthropy is integrated into what a child is interested in or passionate about, she finds, "the more it tends to stick."

And, perhaps surprisingly, philanthropy might be more "sticky" if it involves personal sacrifice, according to Lara Akin. Her research found that kids looked happier when giving away their own Goldfish than when they could take Goldfish from another pot and give those away instead. "I think this suggests that not only is giving rewarding to kids, but also that giving might be especially rewarding when it involves some sense of sacrifice," she says.

So although it makes sense for parents to want to facilitate their kids' generosity by making donations on their behalf, it might be more effective in the long run for kids to have some skin in the game.

With that in mind, my wife and I decided not to simply involve our daughter in our end-of-year donations this year. Instead, we divided her weekly allowance into three pots—for her to Spend, Save, and Share—and at the end of the year, she can decide how she wants to donate her own personal Share amount. Which brings me to the next lesson...

5. Give them choice

Though there have been some well-intentioned efforts to involve kids in philanthropy through mandatory service-learning programs, evidence suggests those efforts might backfire.

Decades of research has found that when people are forced to do something kind for others, or even subtly coerced to do it through an external reward, they'll see themselves as less altruistic and thus feel less motivated to help others in the long run.

Instead, studies by Netta Weinstein and Richard Ryan, among others, have found that people feel happier after performing kind, helpful—or "prosocial"—acts only when those acts are voluntary and self-directed; when they feel pressured to help, they feel worse. That's why Jill Gordon stresses the importance of presenting options to kids and giving them choice. "If you're not involving kids in that conversation, they feel like it's being forced on them," she says. "It feels like homework."

Gordon and others say it's important to keep in mind that there are different forms of giving: volunteering one's time, donating money or goods, lending one's talents to a cause. Not only are some more appropriate for different ages, but some are also more appropriate for different kids. Giving kids the freedom to choose what feels like the best fit for them will increase the odds that they'll feel good about their generosity and stick with it.

"Giving givers choice—encouraging them to give but allowing them to choose what they give to—can make a big difference in the well-being of the giver afterwards," says Hamlin. "And we want kids to grow up to be prosocial adults who will continue to give even after we're not around to make them."

That's why, this year, my wife and I resolved to play it cool—no guilt, no coercion.

But one night over dinner a few weeks ago, I casually brought up that we were planning to support a few organizations that we care about—and my daughter instantly chimed in with how she wanted to donate the money from her Share pot: "An orphanage or an animal shelter!" (Her cousins recently adopted a dog from an animal shelter; I'm still not sure where the orphanage idea came from.) But of course, we want her burst of generosity to come more than a once a year. Our goal is for these activities around the holidays to help build a lasting habit of generosity—a habit that doesn't only bring her happiness but also teaches a deeper lesson about her place in the world. It's a lesson that most parents want to teach their kids, and one that Sara Konrath eloquently summed up toward the end of our conversation.

"We're all interconnected with each other," she said. "And giving is just a reminder of our human connection to others: Not only are the recipients not alone, because we're thinking of them, but we are not alone."



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Craft: Suncatcher Snowflake for Kids

kideefoodies.com

WHAT YOU NEED

- Cardboard or a ready-made snowflake shape
- Colored plastic paper or tissue paper
- Scissors
- Glue

HOW TO MAKE IT

Step 1: Cut the snowflake shape from the cardboard paper or use a ready-made snowflake shape. The snowflake pattern must have holes, where you will glue the pieces of colorful plastic or tissue paper. I think the plastic works better, as it shines more.

Step 2: When your suncatcher snowflake is ready, you can stick in on the window and admire all the beautiful colors! We also did a little game, placing a white cardboard near the window to observe its reflection and changing shapes. My daughter had a lot of fun :) Enjoy!



Recipe: Raspberry Ice Cream in a Bag

tasteoffhome.com

TIME: 15 min. **MAKES:** 1 Cup

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup half-and-half cream
- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 cups coarsely crushed ice
- 3/4 cup salt

NUTRITION FACTS

1/2 cup:
 299 calories,
 13g fat (9g saturated fat)
 65mg cholesterol
 76mg sodium
 35g carbohydrate
 (32g sugars, 2g fiber)
 5g protein

DIRECTIONS

Step 1: Using two 1-quart resealable plastic bags, place one bag inside the other. Place the first five ingredients inside the inner bag. Seal both bags, pressing out as much air as possible.

Step 2: Place the 2 bags in a gallon-size resealable plastic freezer bag. Add ice and salt. Seal bag, again pressing out as much air as possible.

Step 3: Shake and knead cream mixture until thickened, about 5 minutes. (If desired, wear mittens or wrap bags in a kitchen towel while shaking to protect hands from the cold ice.)



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