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Fall ~ 2026
Back to School

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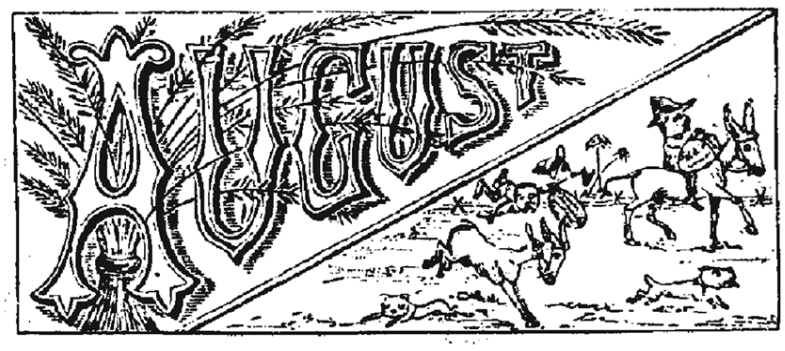





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ITHACA CHILD

Vol. XXXVIII, No. III
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2026



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On our cover...

It's that time of year again! Time to make sure you have all your school supplies ready to go; and that you and your child can both be up and ready to go! My dad headed to work when I had to leave for school so he always drove me there; but I took the bus home. I would have been the first one picked up in the morning with an hour and a half ride; but I was the first dropped off when the bus left school in the afternoon. It was a fun social time. I just didn't want to have to get up at 5:30 in the morning and I don't think my parents wanted to either!

Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy this issue and thank you for reading *Ithaca Child.* Jim Graney, Publisher

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News & Notes

Updates and briefs from around the region

By Ithaca Child

Research Opportunity for Moms and Babies at Binghamton University

Having a baby is an exciting time, but it's not always easy. It can be stressful and chaotic. We know that moms help babies learn about emotions and try to help their babies feel better when they are upset; but babies also influence how moms feel. If you are the mother of a 6-12-month-old, we would love your help with our study to better understand how babies learn about emotions as they grow, and how moms' and babies' moods influence each other over time.

The study involves visiting the Binghamton University campus once every three months for a year (five times in total). At each visit, moms will complete questionnaires, an interview, and a simple play task with their baby. Babies will be shown images of faces expressing different emotions to see which ones they look at. In total, each visit will take about 1.5 hours and you'll be together the entire time. Moms will receive $50 for each visit ($250 in total) and babies will receive small prizes each time.

Staff will be available to provide childcare for older siblings in a designated space with toys and activities. A changing table is also available, as are private spaces to nurse and pump if needed. Learn more at infant.binghamton.edu or contact mood@binghamton.edu.

Historical Skills Workshop for Kids Planned for November

The Cortland County Historical Society is offering a Simple Weaving workshop for kids, with two dates available. The workshop will teach simple weaving skills, and is best suited for children ages 8-12. Participants will learn about the importance of weaving in households of the past, and see examples of textiles from the museum collection. Materials, instruction, and a snack will be provided. Workshop dates: November 4 or November 18, from 3:30-5:30pm. Register online at https://cortland-county-historical-society-inc.square.site/shop/events/6 or call 607-756-6071.



image provided

Weaving display and other historical skills are available this fall for kids!

Hot Out? Take Your Little Ones to The Nook

The Nook, located in The Shops at Ithaca Mall, is an engaging play area, available at no cost for caregivers with infants and children 5 years-old and below to talk, sing, read, and play together to build essential early literacy skills. It's also an access point for free children's books to take home and keep. The space offers several different areas for children to play, with enough room for families to spread out. There is a pretend play area with a kitchen and costumes, a soft play area for infants to practice their tummy time and climbing, a toddler-height art table and easel, and a comfy living room space with blocks, cars, and fine motor toys. To learn more about The Nook, visit https://www.familyreading.org/the-nook/.

Music Together Fall Classes in Ithaca

Join a community of families and friends, singing, laughing and learning together! Ithaca Suzuki Music Education (ISME) is partnering with Music Together to create a playful, inclusive family activity, fun for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. You will experience research-based music education with high-quality recordings and songbooks. Fall classes will be offered on Tue mornings at ISME on South Hill and Thu mornings at the Dryden Center for Community. For more information, visit https://www.ithacasuzukimusiceducation.com/music-together.

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KIDDISPHERE

It's back to school time! This issue is designed to help you relate to what the transition is like for parents and for kids. With stories we hope you enjoy, our calendar, and lots of ideas to help you get back in gear with this time of year, we've designed an issue we hope you find interesting, fun and useful. From features about summer travels, throwing a cooking themed party, tips on some of the latest books, how to help your little ones when older siblings head back to school, and simply asking the right questions to get into your child's world, we know it's a crazy and stressful time of year. We encourage you to stop for a moment and make sure you take time to enjoy the season with your family before we head into the depths of Autumn and the start of the holidays. They'll be here soon enough!

Meanwhile, thank you for reading Ithaca Child. We wish you a happy, healthy back to school season. Sincerely, Jim Graney, Publisher



Chef Du Jour: How to Throw a Cooking-Themed Birthday Party

By Pam Molnar

oes your son or daughter enjoy spending time in the kitchen preparing food for the family or for friends? Consider a cooking-themed party this year. While most parties include food, for a cooking party, the preparation of the food becomes the party theme and central activity.

Start the event by giving each guest part of their party-favor bag – inexpensive child-size aprons that can be found online. Consider little chef hats, too. Personalize the aprons by adding each guest's name with marker or a sticker.

In the kitchen

Begin with appetizers: build-your-own bugs or mosaic peppers. For the "bugs," set up stations with pretzel rods (for logs) and peanut butter (for "glue"). Let the kids create caterpillars by lining up small grapes, blueberries, or other tiny, round fruit. You can even add sugar eyes, which can be found in the baking section of many grocery stores.

To make the mosaics, cut green, red, orange, and yellow bell peppers into small pieces in a variety of shapes. Spread crackers with cream cheese to serve as the base, then let your food artists create delicious masterpieces.

Next up, the main dish: cookie-cutter pizza. Purchase pre-made pizza dough or make it from scratch. Let everyone take turns rolling out the dough, or divide it up and give each guest their own mini rolling pin. Then cut out circles (or other shapes) with cookie cutters. Spread with pizza sauce, then top with cheese, veggies, or pepperoni before baking in the oven. These bite-sized treats will be a hit with any age group!

Birthday cake is not for everyone and can be difficult to create as a group. A fun dessert alternative? Baked bananas in foil packets. Simply slice open a banana (leaving the peel on) and stuff with mini marshmallows, chocolate chips, and/or peanut butter chips. Wrap in a foil packet and bake at 400 degrees for about five minutes. Carefully remove from peel and serve with ice cream.

Party games

• Food pictionary – Write the names of different foods on separate index cards. Keep it simple and familiar: hamburger, hot dog, carrot, broccoli, mac and cheese, sandwich, ramen, ice cream, etc. Place the cards in a bowl, then have the guests take turns selecting a card and drawing the food item on a dry erase board while the other partygoers try to guess what it is.

• Name that produce – Head to the market to find a variety of unusual fruits and vegetables. Lay them out on a table and label each one with a number. Provide each player with a sheet of paper containing the number of each fruit or vegetable. Players then try to select the right name for each item from a list of words, writing it next to the item's number. The player who guesses the most correct answers wins a prize.

• Taste test – Play this game blindfolded for an extra element of fun. Give each player a spoon and let them taste each item to see if they can identify it. Try smooth foods like applesauce, pumpkin puree, and sour cream, and chunkier foods like fruit slices or cookie pieces. Check with parents for allergies before playing this game.

• Bucket of fun – Make a large bucket of popcorn and place in the center of the table. Divide the kids into teams of two. Sit the two members of each team opposite each other at the table. One person on the team holds a plastic cup on their head while their partner throws popcorn into the cup. Set a timer for a minute or two and then switch places. The best combined number of popcorn pieces is the winning team. It's harder than you think!

Party favors

In addition to the aprons, send the party guests off with a treat they can make at home. Pinterest is a great source of recipe-in-a-jar gift inspiration. Once you've decided on a recipe, purchase mason jars and enough ingredients to make one recipe jar per guest. Fill the jars by layering the ingredients, then seal. Be sure to include recipe directions for the kids to follow at home. Check out the sidebar for ideas.

Dessert in a jar: a great parting gift

• *Smores mix*

1 sleeve graham crackers (about 10 crackers or 1 ½ cups of crumbs)

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What to Do With the Littles When the Bigs Go Back to School

By Shannon Dean

On the first day of school, we pack the lunchboxes and snap the porch photos. Backpack straps slide off little shoulders as we hug our "bigs" goodbye and watch the bus drive off with a lump in our throats.

As we turn back, there waiting at the front door is our "little". The toddler who's been watching the transition with wide eyes. The preschooler who doesn't understand why their main playmate just vanished onto a yellow bus. The three-year-old who's looking at you like, "Well, what do we do now?"

The mornings after the big kids go back to school is one of the sweetest, most underrated transitions of parenthood. And with a little intention, they can become ones that your littles will cherish. Here are some ideas for a smooth transition:

Acknowledge the loss

Before you pull out the Play-Doh, acknowledge that this may be a real loss for your little one. Even if they had just been squabbling with their older sibling for ten minutes before the bus came, that sibling is likely deeply missed.

Let your child feel the change, the quiet—name it, if you can. Try, "I see you looking out the window. You miss your brother, don't you?" In this moment, validation matters. Then, reframe the change not as an ending, but as a new possibility: "Now you and I get to have our own special adventures."

The "back-to-little" bucket list

Make a short, achievable list (three to five items) of activities that are harder to do when older siblings are home. This isn't about keeping the elementary school pace. It's about slowing way, way down. Ideas include:

• The long pancake breakfast. Bust out the chocolate chips. Let them pour the batter. Eat with forks, then fingers, and then giggling.

• Stroller walk with no destination. Walk to the end of the block, or around the block. Notice three acorns, a spiderweb, a lawn decoration. Let your little one set the pace. (Spoiler: It will be slow, which is the point.)

• That one off-limits toy. The box of 500 building bricks that always causes sibling conflict? Get it out. Play together without anyone grabbing or toppling. Cleanup is optional.

Create a "big kid countdown" ritual

Your little one may not grasp the concept of 3:00pm, but they do understand, "After lunch, we do something to get ready for your big sister." Build a simple daily routine of anticipation. Here are some ideas:

• Make a welcome-home sign on construction paper each morning, using whatever art supplies you have on hand. Tape it to the front door. By Friday, you'll have a gallery.

• Bake an afternoon snack that will be waiting when the bus returns. Think muffins, banana bread, or "surprise cookies" (aka refrigerator dough with hidden chocolate chips or another candy).

• Assign "welcome back" jobs. This could be placing a cup of milk on the table, picking a show to watch together, or choosing one book to read aloud before homework.

The morning routine reset (no timer required)

When your elementary-age kids are home, mornings run on cortisol and countdowns. When it's just you and your little, you can run on cuddles and curiosity. Try letting them wake up naturally (within reason). Let them stay in pajamas until 9:30am (or later—no judgment). Let them "lead" one activity completely. If they want to put socks on stuffed animals for twenty minutes, that is now the curriculum. Eat lunch on a blanket in the living room. Call it an "indoor picnic". The goal is not productivity, it's presence.

Hit the local hotspots

One of the best parts of this season is that many family-friendly spots are suddenly quieter during the day. Check out:

• Children's museums. Many offer discounted admission or special morning hours for toddlers and preschoolers once school begins.

• Nature centers and botanic gardens. Weekday mornings are often serene, with plenty of space for little legs to wander and explore at their own pace.

• Indoor play cafes or trampoline parks. Many host "preschool jump" or "toddler time" sessions specifically designed for the under-5 crowd when bigger kids are in school.

• Library storytime. Many libraries offer weekday sessions specifically for toddlers and preschoolers. Bonus: You'll find other parents who are also navigating this same transition.

Don't forget to fill your own cup

Let's be honest: the shift from managing multiple children to one small, velcro-y human can feel disorienting. You might miss the chaos. You might feel guilty for not being "educational enough." You might even be lonely. Permit yourself to do something small that's just for you. Read three pages of a novel while they play. Call another parent. Stare at your phone for five minutes without shame. A recharged grown-up is the best playmate.

When tears come

Even with the best plans, some mornings won't go smoothly. Your little one will cry for their older sibling. That's okay. Sit on the porch steps together and wave at passing cars. Say, "I know. It's a big change." Then pivot to something sensory, like blowing bubbles, squishing Play-Doh, or running your hands under cool water. These small resets work because they bypass language and land right in the body, where young children process emotion.

The bigger gift

By the second week, a new rhythm will emerge. You'll notice your child narrating their own play, solving small problems, and looking to you with new confidence. And when 3:00 rolls around, and the front door flies open, your "big" will collapse into the kitchen, smelling of pencil shavings and fresh air, and your little will run to them shouting, "I made you a cookie!"

That sweet, sticky, loud reunion is the whole point. Back-to-school season isn't just for the ones who leave. It's for the ones who stay home and practice the art of "welcome back".

So leave the dishes in the sink. Take the slow walk. Your youngest are this little for only a short time. And this quiet, in-between time? It's not an empty schedule. It's an invitation.

The Back-to-Little Survival Kit

Keep these five things within reach for the first two weeks (or more):

• An analog timer. Flip it or turn it to 10 minutes when you need to make coffee or take a break. Explain, "When the red is gone, we'll play again."

• An "emergency" busy-bin. Fill a box or bin with sticky notes, clothespins, pom-poms, and lots of craft supplies. Bring it out on challenging mornings.

• A playlist. Fill it with upbeat songs your child loves (and some that you love too). A dance party is an emotional reset.

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Schools and After School





Two Weddings, One Hungry Goat, and a Dozen Idlis: Summer Adventures in India

By Jayasri Srinivasan

"Hi! We're traveling as a family and have seats together. But would you mind seating us as far apart from each other as possible?"

Here I go fantasizing again. Why did I ever think that family travel was a good idea?! We were about to board our flight. My younger son Atula and I were still arguing. It wasn't my fault. I just told him to stop dragging his backpack, tie his shoe laces, and pull up his pants a bit. I also reminded him to use the bathroom before we boarded. It's not like I was nagging him or anything.

"Fine," I said, exasperated, "go sit with Appa!" Atula happily complied. *Now* he decides to listen to me?

I offered a lukewarm apology for snapping at him, and happily sat next to my sister. We hadn't traveled together to India since 2002 and I was looking forward to it. I settled in, scrolled through the movie offerings, and dozed off. Next thing I knew, dinner was being served. Ah, what joy to be middle-aged and enjoy eating a tin-foil covered tray of vegetable *biriyani*, *bhindi masala*, and yogurt!

A day later, we reached our hometown, Bengaluru. No time to get over jet lag on this trip! We hit the ground running. Two of my favorite cousins were getting married within a week of each other. The last time we six cousins were together was at my sister's wedding a decade ago.



image provided

© 2026 Jayasri Srinivasan. Atula had fun meeting with the cows

"Let's not wait another 10 years to meet like this," my little cousin said.

"Amen!"

The next few days were a whirl of *pujas*, pre-wedding rituals, and packing. The first of the two weddings was in Chennai—the vibrant, artistic, culturally-rich capital city of the state of Tamil Nadu. We traveled with our extended family by the Vande Bharat train. The five hour journey went by quickly. We chatted, joked, and passed around snacks. Apparently, we were having a bit too much fun. We overheard a fellow passenger describing us to someone on the phone: "There's a wedding party traveling in our compartment. They've been talking and laughing this whole time and making a lot of noise!"

That's ok—no need to feel embarrassed. We overheard some of that aunty's family gossiping, too – and she wasn't exactly whispering on her phone now, was she?!

We reached Chennai, had dinner at an iconic restaurant called Annalakshmi, and went to the comfy hotel my uncle and aunt had arranged for us. The Chennai wedding was splendid. The Vedic rituals were performed in strict accordance with Hindu tradition. The reception featured a lively vocal performance by a talented "Indian Idol" contestant. She kept the guests entertained and got them on their feet for some fun dancing.

We enjoyed festive, lavish, three-course meals on bright green banana leaves. We were served heaps of rice with scrumptious *sambar*, *kootu*, and *kozhambu* featuring a medley of vegetables cooked with a mélange of spices.

It takes some deft maneuvering to eat rice and *rasam* with your hands while ensuring it doesn't slide off the leaf. You make a small crater in the middle of your heap of rice, pour *rasam* into it, and eat quickly. I hadn't realized how much I missed eating like this! The desserts were equally delicious and varied: a tantalizing, melt-in-your mouth y*elaneer* (coconut water) *halwa*, litchi *basundi*, and *laddoos*, just to name a few.

We returned to Bengaluru after the first wedding and started preparing for the next one.

The second wedding was conducted in a temple. The ceremony was short and sweet. After the wedding festivities concluded, we got to spend some time with our beautiful sisters-in-law. They are both warm-hearted, sweet, smart, and great fun to be around. We are so lucky to have them join our family!

My uncle and aunt hosted lunch at a serene farmhouse (Balan Farms) nestled within a busy neighborhood. A green oasis, it offered a beautifully-curated outdoor space with traditional architecture. This setting gave the guests plenty of space to relax and mingle. Tastefully-designed spots throughout the garden offered plenty of photo ops. It was a lovely way to celebrate the newlyweds and reconnect with old friends we hadn't seen in years.

After the weddings, we settled into a quieter routine for a few days. We rode the metro, a welcome development to combat the city's snarling traffic. A highlight for Atula was regular outings with my uncle, who took him out daily to feed some nearby cows and goats. My uncle bought bunches of bananas and, inexplicably, packets of Parle-G biscuits. Guess what the goat's preferred snack was! He turned out to be quite a pushy fellow and chased Atula around my uncle's scooter to grab the last biscuit!

"How did he get so annoying? He was such a cute baby goat," huffed Atula, as he tried to escape the goat.

Eating in one of the city's *Darshinis* was another highlight. These fast food cafes are an iconic and well-established presence in Bengaluru's food scene. Unpretentious, ultra-efficient, and hygienic, these cafes whip up a stunning

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Learn More & Register

Transportation Options Available!
Dryden School District provides transportation to Lime Hollow for Dryden Schools.

News & Notes

continued from page 4

We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym

You may have noticed the sign while driving on Route 13. We Rock the Spectrum Kid's Gym will be opening this fall in Ithaca, next to the office of Well Being Pediatrics at 402 3rd Street. Dr. Jessica Casey is thrilled to expand her offerings to the community by bringing in this successful franchise, founded by a mother of a child with autism. Designed to be a sensory-safe inclusive kids gym, the idea is that children of all abilities can play, learn, and grow together. At We Rock, walk-ins and members will find unique classes, occupational equipment, and arts and crafts to help kids flex their fine motor skills. The indoor zip line, climbing wall and trampoline are always fan favorites and they plan to also offer to host birthday parties! Watch for details and an opening date in the coming weeks through updates on social media or on their website at werockthespectrumithaca.com

Tour the Bement-Billings Farmstead

The Newark Valley Historical Society is offering tours of the Bement-Billings Farmstead every weekend through September, from noon-4:00pm. The farmstead is a living history museum that interprets domestic life, agricultural practices, and the natural environment of the early 1800s. It is located one mile north of the Village of Newark Valley on Route 38. Tours cost $3 for adults and $2 for kids ages 5-16. The gift shop will be open during tour hours. Learn more at www.nvhistory.org.



image provided

Laundry day in the early 1800's as pictured at the Bement-Billings Farmstead.

Racker Announces New Community Event

Day in the Park kicks off on Saturday, August 29th from noon–3:00pm at Stewart Park. After 12 years of extraordinary generosity and support, raising more than $1.5 million for Racker's Early Childhood programs, Racker is celebrating the legacy of the Racker Rivals Big Red charity hockey game with a community-wide event and a new long-term fundraising strategy: Even Years We Party, Odd Years We Play.

Day in the Park is a family-friendly fundraising celebration supporting Racker's critical programs for people with disabilities. Held at the fully-inclusive Stewart Park, the event will feature appearances by the Big Red hockey teams, live music from Flame the Band, free carousel rides, food trucks, a sensory pathway complete with crafts, movement activities, lawn games, prizes, and other inclusive, mission-focused activities for all ages.

Racker Rivals Big Red will return in 2027 and continue every other year during odd-numbered years. This rotating schedule allows Racker to introduce fresh experiences, engage new audiences, and better align with the needs of community partners and supporters. Learn more at www.racker.org.

Summer Fun at the Sciencenter

Dive into an underwater adventure at Ocean Bound, a new, interactive summer exhibition. Ocean Bound offers a unique and breathtaking introduction to the majesty of the ocean. Experience coral reefs in HD, and make rain cascade down mountains, through rivers, and finally to the ocean. Journey through watersheds to see how our actions on land affect our oceans, and learn the science behind keeping our water clean. Discover how scientists are protecting aquatic habitats, and learn simple ways that you can help make a difference.

For outdoor fun, check out the science-themed mini-golf course and explore the Sciencenter's 2000-square-foot, multi-level Science Park where you can experiment with sound, motion, water, and physics. Little explorers ages four and under will love the Curiosity Playground, designed for small hands and curious minds. Learn more at www.sciencenter.org.

The Museum of the Earth Welcomes New Lungfish

There's a new addition to the exhibits at Museum of the Earth: a live South American lungfish named Minhoca. Minhoca ("Min" for short) means "worm" in Portuguese. Min replaces Tembea ("Tem"), the African lungfish that had been on display at the Museum until she passed away late last year due to old age.

Warren Allmon, Director of the Paleontological Research Institution, the organization that operates the Museum, explains that having a live lungfish on display "helps visitors understand the kind of animal that lived in New York State and Pennsylvania more than 350 million years ago, during the Devonian Period." Fossilized lungfishes and their burrows can be found in rocks in the Catskill Mountains, for example, which was a wide river delta during the Devonian. The lungfish burrow on display at the Museum comes from Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania, and is accompanied by numerous other lungfish fossils. Over time, visitors will be able to watch Min grow from a six-inch juvenile into a several-foot-long fish. Learn more at www.priweb.org.

August is Bug Month at the MOST in Syracuse

The Bug Guts Slime Station will be open every day at 11:30am. Make your own container of polymer slime to take home, and add your choice of custom "bug guts" to personalize your creation. Free with admission.

On August 15, join the Museum for Bug Day. Investigate the incredible world of insects with hands-on activities and displays about the largest kingdom of animals. Learn about the world of crawling, flying, and wriggling creatures that represent about 80% of the world's species. Featuring Bug Craft stations and a Bug Scavenger Hunt, in addition to the Bug Guts slime station. Add on a showing of *Animal Kingdom* to see some amazing bugs on the big screen. Learn more at www.most.org.

Registration is Open for the 2026 Tompkins Treasure Hunt

Just like last year, The History Center will hide $10,000 in gems, and challenge Tompkins County to find them. For 2026, the puzzles explore 250 years of local history. These puzzles are genuinely challenging—so grab friends, family, or coworkers and work together! All you need is a smartphone, curiosity, and people you like solving problems with. Register your team today, and on launch day (September 12) you'll receive the first puzzle. Each puzzle leads to a unique location, where you'll find a QR code. The final puzzle leads to the hidden treasure. Learn more and register at www.tompkinstreasure.com.

Self-Guided Garden Tours Now Available in Spanish and Mandarin

Visitors to Cornell Botanic Gardens can now experience the beauty and cultural richness of the gardens, arboretum, and natural areas in more languages. Cornell Botanic Gardens has expanded its self-guided walking tours to Spanish and Mandarin to bring understanding of plants and cultures to broader audiences. Visitors scan a QR code to access a web-based Garden Guide, which offers 10 self-guided tours throughout the Gardens. In addition, gardens around the Nevin Welcome Center and F.R. Newman Arboretum offer stops with short audio narratives.

This multilingual project came to life through collaboration among the Botanic Gardens and two campus partners: the Language Resource Center and the Translator Interpreter Program. Cornell University and Cornell Botanic Gardens welcome thousands of visitors a year, many of whom speak languages other than English. Learn more at https://cornellbotanicgardens.org/news/news-highlights/cornell-botanic-gardens-introduces-self-guided-tours-in-spanish-and-mandarin.

Cool Off at the Alex Haley Municipal Pool

Located at 408 N. Albany St, the pool is open seven days a week through August 30. Hours through August 16 are noon-8:00pm. From August 17-30, the pool is open from noon-7:00pm.

Lap swim is available Monday-Friday from noon-1:00 and 4:00-8:00pm, and on weekends from noon-8:00pm. Daily admission: children (1-12) and seniors (60+) $2.50. Adults (18-59) and teens/students (13-17) $3.50. Learn more at https://www.cityofithacany.gov/327/Greater-Ithaca-Activities-Center.

Ithaca's 18th Annual Porchfest Returns September 20

Porchfest is a community-driven music festival held on the porches of the Fall Creek and Northside neighborhoods of Ithaca. It is free and open for anyone to attend or perform. Performances take place on porches, yards and driveways, in a celebration of our vibrant creative community. The festival has grown steadily since its inception—from 20 bands in 2007 to upwards of 150 in recent years—plus food vendors and a Makers Market, too. To learn more about the festival – including each year's original artwork, and how to volunteer, donate, or vend – visit https://www.porchfest.org.

continued on page 14

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Local Announcements, Events & Programs

By Laura Rosenfeld

What's Happening?

Event Listings

August

12 Wednesday

Family Open Play
Cornell Cooperative Extension, 3:00-5:00pm. Free space for families to come with their children (age 4 and under), to play and socialize with other families while getting out of the heat. A variety of toys and books are available, and plenty of space for movement. Weekly through September 2. Info: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2025/11/17/family-open-play.

LGBTQ+ Youth Group
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Join us to do crafts, play games, and socialize. Whether you're lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning, or just trying to figure things out—we're here for you! Registration is not required. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/lgbtq-youth-group-61522.

Music on the Hill: Ageless Jazz Band
Dryden Veteran's Memorial Home, 6:00pm. Free. Info: https://drydenrec.recdesk.com/Community/Page?pageId=26643.

13 Thursday

Ithaca Murals Walk with Caleb Thomas
Meet in TCPL's main hall at 10:00am. A guided walking tour of public art around downtown Ithaca, with a focus on literature-inspired projects. We'll explore how collaborative public art can inspire, connect, and build our community stronger. Rain or shine. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/tcpl-tours-ithaca-murals-walk-caleb-thomas-64878.

Story + Craft
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. A weekly reading and creating event for children. Join us for a read-aloud, followed by art-making or a guided craft. Best for children 5 and up, but younger are welcome with an adult to assist. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/story-craft-63276.

Downtown Summer Concert Series
Bernie Milton Pavilion, Ithaca Commons, Thursdays, 5:00-8:00pm. Free and fun for the entire family. Featuring local, regional, and national acts in a wide variety of genres including jazz, blues, reggae, hip-hop, rock, and more. Info/lineup: https://www.downtownithaca.com/summer-concert-series/.

Plant Foraging Basics
Hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension online at 6:00pm. We'll start with general foraging tips, and then go over some easily-identifiable species. For a hands-on follow-up, register for the Foraging Walk on August 23. Info/registration: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2026/08/13/plant-foraging.

Books & Brew Book Club
Hopshire Farm & Brewery, 6:00pm. This month's theme is Vacation. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

14 Friday

Summer Storytime
Montgomery Park, Dryden, 10:00am. Join Ms. Corbett and friends for stories, crafts, songs, and a FREE book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Baby & Toddler Storytime
Children and their caregivers are invited to join us for songs, rhymes, and books at the park next to the Henry St. John Building on Geneva St., at 10:30am. On days when it's forecasted to be below 60°, wet outside, and/or we have a heat advisory, we'll meet at the Library. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/baby-toddler-storytime-63894.

Interpretive Gorge Walk
Buttermilk Falls State Park, 10:00am. Free. Hosted by PRI. The Finger Lakes region has an outstanding geological record exposed in the local gorges. This guided walk series will introduce major concepts about geology and geologic time, allowing participants to interpret the geological history of the region while enjoying the beauty of our local area. Info: www.priweb.org.

Stitch Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 1:00pm. Ages 16+. Stitch Club is an opportunity for knitters, crocheters, needle-pointers, and other stitchers to come together and work, and share our projects, skills, and advice. Stitchers of every experience level are welcome. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/copy-stitch-club-62303.

Free Family Movie Night
Groton Public Library, Fridays at 5:30pm. Free popcorn, too! Info: www.grotonpubliclibrary.net.

The Importance of Being Earnest
Produced independently by Theatre Incognita and presented at Kitchen Theatre Company, August 14-16. Schedule/tickets: https://www.kitchentheatre.org.

Mary Poppins: The Broadway Musical
Smith Opera House, August 14-16. Featuring a talented cast of local young performers, unforgettable songs, dazzling dancing, and plenty of theatrical magic. This practically perfect production is an experience the whole family will enjoy. Schedule/tickets: https://thesmith.org/events-list/mary-poppins-the-broadway-musical/.

15 Saturday

Fossil ID Day
Museum of the Earth, every Saturday from 10:00am-5:00pm. Included with Museum admission. Did you find a rock in your backyard? Do you think it might be a fossil? Bring it to our Prep Lab, where Dr. Maureen Bickley will be happy to assist you. Info: www.priweb.org.

Geology Rocks!
Southworth Library, 11:00am. Explore fossils and rocks with the Paleontological Research Institution (PRI). Free copies of *The Street Beneath My Feet* by Charlotte Guillian, while supplies last. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Family Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, Saturdays at 11:00am. Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to celebrate reading and build early literacy skills with stories, songs, and hands-on fun. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/family-storytime-63206.

Math Fun with MathHappens
Sciencenter, 11:00am. Join us for playful, informal math exploration with the MathHappens Foundation. Discover the "M" in STEM through hands-on models and engaging learning experiences. Info: https://sciencenter.org/experiences/events/.

Illustrator Visit: Julian Plum
Tompkins County Public Library, 1:30pm. Join us to read *Whose Tree is This?* written by Marilyn Singer and illustrated by local artist Julian Plum. Curious about how the art gets made for picture books? Julian will talk about the illustration process (and his love of bugs and trees!). Attendees will have the chance to make their very own tree illustrations. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/illustrator-visit-julian-plum-64575.

YMCA Family Field Day
Outdoor Education Center, 1349 Mecklenburg Rd., 2:00-4:00pm. An afternoon of family fun! Featuring yard games like disc golf, ladder ball, and cornhole, plus a guided nature walk. Registration: Family Field Day.

16 Sunday

Science Connections: Little Bunny Foo Foo
Sciencenter, 2:00pm. Learn all about domestic rabbits from the Tompkins County 4-H Little Bunny Foo Foos club. They'll bring rabbits to pet, answer your questions, and put on a rabbit hopping demonstration. Info: https://sciencenter.org/experiences/events/.

17 Monday

Sit! Stay! Read!
Tompkins County Public Library, 3:00pm. Children are invited to practice their reading skills by sharing a story with a truly non-judgmental listener—a dog! Children who attend six sessions will earn a free book of their choice. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/sit-stay-read-52762.

Teen Maker Monday
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Participants will have the opportunity to learn and use Makerspace machines. A variety of crafting supplies will be available. This program is first come-first served for machines, materials, and assistance. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-maker-monday-54443.

18 Tuesday

Healthy Tuesday Free Food Giveaway
Groton Public Library, Tuesdays at 12:30pm. We receive a large donation of food from Wegmans courtesy of the Friendship Donation Network. Info: www.grotonpubliclibrary.net.

LEGO Family Build Night
Tompkins County Public Library, 5:30pm. Buckets of LEGO will be provided for participants to borrow for their builds. Participants will also have the opportunity to display their creations in the Youth Services section for one week. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/lego-family-build-night-64437.

Music in the Hollow: The Smoking Loons
Ellis Hollow Community Center, 6:00pm. Free. Scooter's BBQ food truck on site. Info: https://www.ellishollowcc.org/music-in-the-hollow.

19 Wednesday

Family Open Play
Cornell Cooperative Extension, 3:00-5:00pm. Free space for families to come with their children (age 4 and under), to play and socialize with other families while getting out of the heat. A variety of toys and books are available, and plenty of space for movement. Weekly through September 2. Info: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2025/11/17/family-open-play.

Music on the Hill: Tailor Made
Dryden Veteran's Memorial Home, 6:00pm. Free. Info: https://drydenrec.recdesk.com/Community/Page?pageId=26643.

20 Thursday

Ages 8-108 Board Game Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Are you between the ages of 8 and 108 and love playing board games? Join us! No registration necessary; just drop in and join a game, and meet our staff and other board game enthusiasts. If you don't know how to play a game, don't worry—we will teach you! Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/ages-8-108-board-game-club-summer-session-64409.

Ice Cream on the Porch & Middle School Open House
News Roots Charter School, 5:00-6:00pm. This event is open to incoming and current students and their caregivers, as well as the general public. Check out the Downtown Ithaca Summer Concert Series on the Commons afterwards – free and family friendly! Info: www.newroots-school.org.

Downtown Summer Concert Series
Bernie Milton Pavilion, Ithaca Commons, Thursdays, 5:00-8:00pm. Free and fun for the entire family. Featuring local, regional, and national acts in a wide variety of genres including jazz, blues, reggae, hip-hop, rock, and more. Info/lineup: https://www.downtownithaca.com/summer-concert-series/.

21 Friday

Interpretive Gorge Walk
Watkins Glen State Park, 10:00am. Free. Hosted by PRI. The Finger Lakes region has an outstanding geological record exposed in the local gorges. This guided walk series will introduce major concepts about geology and geologic time, allowing participants to interpret the geological history of the region while enjoying the beauty of our local area. Info: www.priweb.org.

Chinese Bilingual Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Join us for a special Chinese-English bilingual storytime every first and third Friday each month. Enjoy fun stories, songs, and rhymes in both Mandarin and English. Children of all ages and their caregivers are welcome. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/chinese-bilingual-storytimezhongyingshuangyugushihui-59816.

Try it! Workshop: Wheel Throwing
171 Cedar Arts, Corning, 6:00pm. Join us in the ceramics studio to give wheel throwing a try without having to commit to a full course. You'll learn some basic techniques and some fundamentals about ceramics. Registration: www.171CedarArts.org.

Nerf Night
YMCA, 6:00-8:00pm. Ages 8 and up will play games inspired by videogames, movies, and gym class classics in a night of energizing fun! Bring your own blasters and darts or borrow some from the Y. Blasters must fire at 100 feet per second or slower, and eye protection must be worn at all times during game play. Info: www.ithacaymca.com.

22 Saturday

Summer Reading Finale
Groton Public Library, noon-5:00pm. Featuring free hotdogs and popcorn; 3D-printed fossil bookmarks; kids coupons for a free book; adult/teen skull game with dice; and a scavenger hunt for kids! Plus: the physics bus from 11:30 to 3:30; face painting from 12:30 to 4:30; author Nate Collins from noon to 5:00; Science Tellers from 12:30 to 1:30; and Paul Krohn with his dino presentation and dino craft from 2:00-3:00. Info: www.grotonpubliclibrary.net.

23 Sunday

Cat Video Fest 2026
Smith Center for the Arts, Geneva, 3:00pm. Oscilloscope Laboratories presents CatVideoFest 2026, a compilation of the latest and best cat videos culled from countless hours of unique submissions and sourced animations, music videos, and classic internet powerhouses. A portion of ticket proceeds from every show goes directly to local cats in need. Tickets: https://thesmith.org/events-list/catvideofest-2026/.

24 Monday

Teen Maker Monday
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Participants will have the opportunity to learn and use Makerspace machines. A variety of crafting supplies will be available. This program is first come-first served for machines, materials, and assistance. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-maker-monday-54443.

Silent Book Club
Southworth Library, 6:30pm. Books are provided to take home, or you can bring your own book. This month's free book is *Speak to Me of Home* by Jeanine Cummins. Enjoy some snacks and quiet reading time at the Library. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

25 Tuesday

Healthy Tuesday Free Food Giveaway
Groton Public Library, Tuesdays at 12:30pm. We receive a large donation of food from Wegmans courtesy of the Friendship Donation Network. Info: www.grotonpubliclibrary.net.

Music in the Hollow: Joe Crookston
Ellis Hollow Community Center, 6:00pm. Free. Scooter's BBQ food truck on site. Info: https://www.ellishollowcc.org/music-in-the-hollow.

26 Wednesday

Family Open Play
Cornell Cooperative Extension, 3:00-5:00pm. Free space for families to come with their children (age 4 and under), to play and socialize with other families while getting out of the heat. A variety of toys and books are available, and plenty of space for movement. Weekly through September 2. Info: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2025/11/17/family-open-play.

27 Thursday

Downtown Summer Concert Series
Bernie Milton Pavilion, Ithaca Commons, Thursdays, 5:00-8:00pm. Free and fun for the entire family. Featuring local, regional, and national acts in a wide variety of genres including jazz, blues, reggae, hip-hop, rock, and more. Info/lineup: https://www.downtownithaca.com/summer-concert-series/.

28 Friday

Interpretive Gorge Walk
Taughannock Falls State Park, 10:00am. Free. Hosted by PRI. The Finger Lakes region has an outstanding geological record exposed in the local gorges. This guided walk series will introduce major concepts about geology and geologic time, allowing participants to interpret the geological history of the region while enjoying the beauty of our local area. Info: www.priweb.org.

29 Saturday

Exhibit Reception: Guild of Natural Science Illustrators
Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, 4:00pm. Opening reception for the Finger Lakes Chapter of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators' annual show at the Conservatory. This free event is open to the public. Info: https://www.tburgarts.org/event-calendar.

September

2 Wednesday

Family Open Play
Cornell Cooperative Extension, 3:00-

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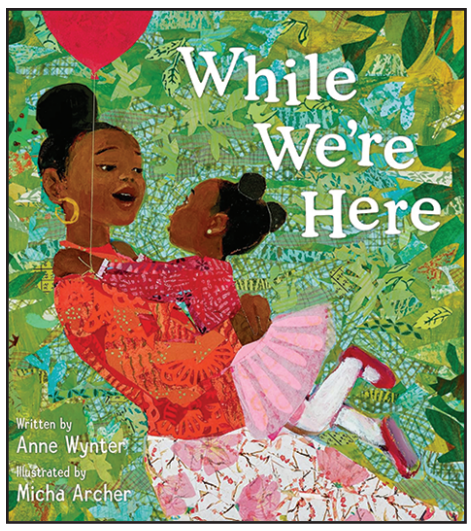
Reading List

By Esty Schachter

This month's reviews include picture books about a mother and child turning disappointment into discovery, body positivity, and inclusivity. The last title, for older readers, takes on the difficult topic of family detention.

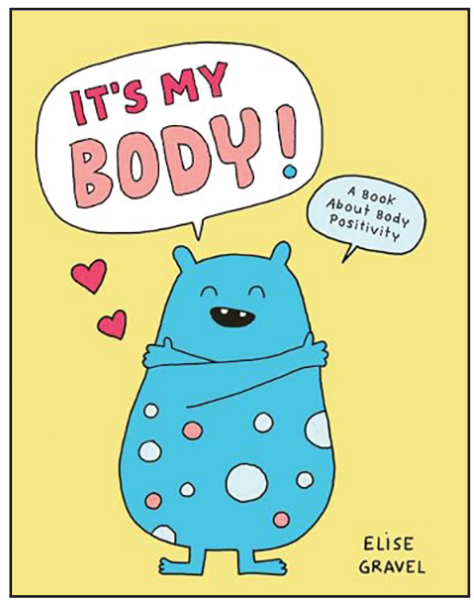


While We're Here, written by Anne Wynter and illustrated by Micha Archer, is a stunning book, in both story and pictures. Put me down for it to be considered for a Caldecott award, as Archer's rich collage illustrations make this a book to return to over and over again, telling the story with gorgeous detail. Wynter's simple text is lovely and meaningful – what's happening is not simple at all.

A mom and daughter are rushing somewhere. We see the gift, a box wrapped in red ribbon, and anticipate what's to come. Repetitions of "Hurry, hurry" detail all the things they need to do, like getting dressed, finding a missing shoe, travelling by subway, and getting where they need to be. "Hurry, hurry, up the hill. We have somewhere to be!"

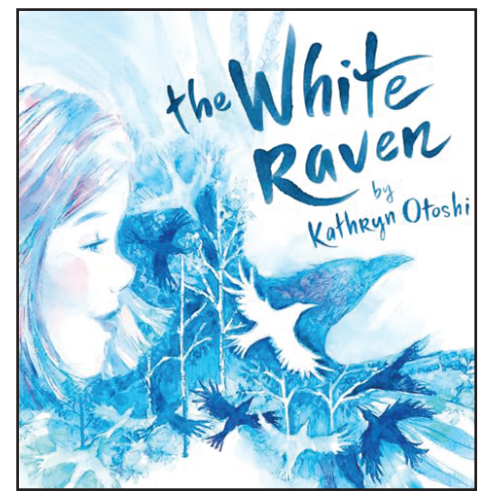
But something unexpected happens. When they get to the park, all that's there is a trash bin full of party supplies, and a happy birthday sign still hanging. Readers realize what's happened along with the characters. The party was the day before; the parent has made a mistake. The girl is sad, of course, and shows it, and is lovingly comforted by the mom, who then takes the moment and turns it into a lovely opportunity for connection. There's no more hurrying needed. "We'll head back home, eventually./We'll sit awhile, beneath a tree./We'll wander off, just you and me./We have nowhere to be."

This is such a satisfying turn, as the mom leads her child in discovering joy at the park, turning their day into a different kind of special than they expected. I love that the book shows a parent making a mistake. I don't think we see it all that often, and it's a powerful thing. Something happened; what do we do about it? Wynter and Archer masterfully and imaginatively show readers. Featuring a Black family in illustrations that will absolutely engage children in repeated readings, *While We're Here* is a delight. (Clarion Books, 2026, ages 4-8)



Elise Gravel's new book ***It's My Body! A Book About Body Positivity*** is a great addition to affirming books about bodies. Gravel encourages readers to see their bodies as their best friends, to be treated with kindness. Using whimsical creatures, she infuses humor into her messages. "There are ALL KINDS of bodies./They come in different SHAPES…/in different SKIN COLORS…/and with different kinds of HAIR./Bodies have different ABILITIES./Sometimes we feel good in our bodies, and sometimes we don't. Bodies have good days…and days that are more difficult./No matter what body you have, how you feel inside it, and what you can do with it…/Your body is your BEST FRIEND."

Themes of self-care, personal space, consent, and what our bodies need to be healthy and keep doing the things we enjoy are folded into the text. Illustrations keep the messages kid-friendly, and the book as a whole makes for a great conversation starter. After all, "Every body should be treated with RESPECT." (Chronicle Books, 2026, ages 4-6)



"If a raven is born *different*, what could happen?" So begins Kathryn Otoshi's "***The White Raven***," which draws inspiration from the natural world. The book aims to "foster critical thinking and encourage open discussions. How do we treat those we deem different from ourselves? Can wounds be healed when touched with compassion? Our spirits are lifted when self-acceptance is embraced. This is a story about a raven who soars."

There are times when ravens are born white, which can lead to the bird being ostracized. This is not always the case, however. Otoshi's research led her to find that both separation and thriving inclusion could exist. The text poses questions for readers to ponder about the ravens, as well as the impact we have on each other, making for a powerful read-aloud and discussion. Illustrations are colorful and captivating. (Red Comet Press, 2026, ages 4-8)



Author Mia Wenjen and illustrator Violeta Encarnación have collaborated on ***Barbed Wire Between Us***, a powerful book about the way in which history repeats itself. Wenjen's story is a reverso poem sharing the stories of a Japanese American child and a Latina child, each experiencing family separation and held in the same detention facility in Oklahoma eighty years apart. Heartbreaking and poignant in its depiction of both children's very difficult situations, the text also shines a light on hope and per-

continued on page 25



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Fun Fall Activities to Connect with Nature

By Sandi Schwartz

Depending on where you live, you may already feel the air getting cooler and crisper. With school back in session and Halloween the subject of conversation, we know that fall has arrived. Though everyone is busy with work, school, and extracurricular activities, this is also a lovely time to take a relaxing break and connect to nature as a family.

U-pick Farms

One of my favorite childhood memories of autumn is going apple picking with my family. I was so enthralled by all the hidden treasures hanging in the orchard. I loved tasting the different varieties of apples and deciding which was my favorite. My own family and I just went apple and raspberry picking last week, so I was able to pass along my cherished childhood memories to them!

This time of year is the perfect opportunity to head to a local farm to pick your own produce of the season, whether it be apples, pears, raspberries, squash, or whatever is available where you live. It is a wonderful chance for the entire family to enjoy a few hours strolling around an orchard or farm taking in the sights, fragrances, and miracles of nature. By taking your children on a u-pick adventure, they will learn about healthy food, farming, and the environment, and you will support your local community. Plus, locally-grown food tastes better, is more nutritious, and stays fresh longer.

The best part is that when you arrive home from the farm, you can spend quality time together in the kitchen creating tasty meals and desserts from the food you picked yourselves. There are so many nutritious, kid-friendly recipes to discover, from smoothies to side dishes to snacks. When children participate in gathering and preparing their food, they are more likely to eat a wider variety of foods and make good food decisions in the future.

Pumpkin Patch

Nothing feels more like fall than pumpkin patches, hay rides, and corn mazes! Your kids will love running around outside in a corn maze and searching for the biggest, brightest pumpkin to take home with them. No matter where you live, you'll likely find someplace nearby offering these seasonal activities for your family to enjoy.

And, of course, your children will have a blast carving the pumpkins and displaying their works of art for neighbors to see. We always love toasting the pumpkin seeds and enjoying them as a healthy snack afterwards. If you can't find a pumpkin patch near you, grab a few pumpkins from a local market!

Fall Foliage

When we experience the beautiful natural colors of the season, we are filled with awe. This special emotion helps us feel happier and calmer, and is worth seeking out. Plan a family hike or road trip to ob-

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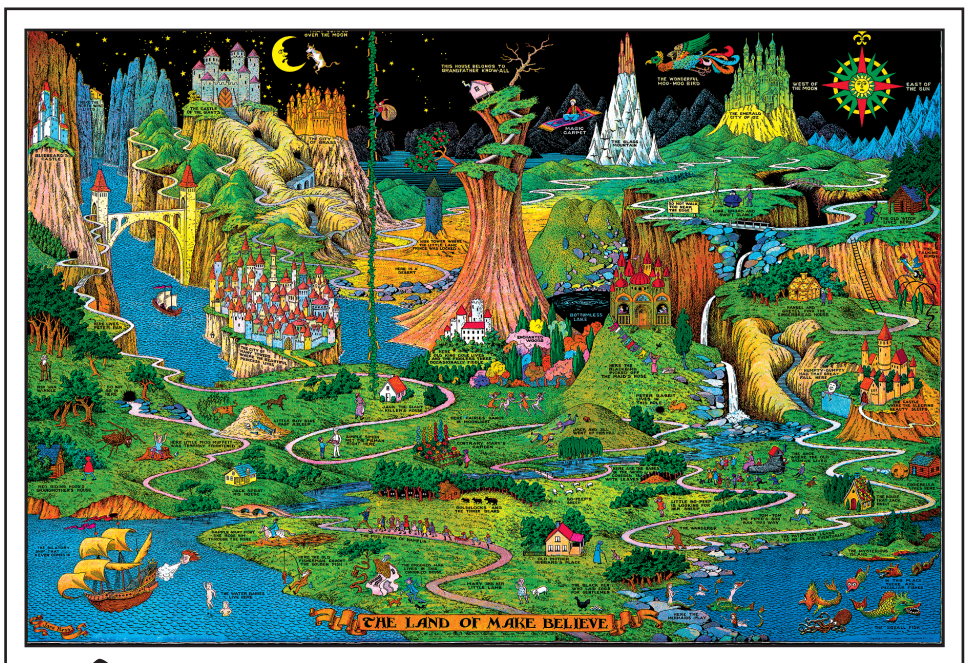

Visit "The Land of Make Believe!"

Own your own print of this classic picture by artist Jaro Hess from the book *East of the Sun, West of the Moon*

It seems that as a child, many of us spent hours looking up at the Land of Make Believe poster. It is with great pleasure that RDI brings the Lomb print back into production. "The Land of Make Believe is being offered in two reproduction styles. Both prints are sized to the originals 24.5 x 37 inches. Prints are offered as Fine Art prints and Photo Poster type prints. The fine art print is printed on a Crane Water color type paper, the photo poster paper is a luster semigloss paper manufactured by Ilford. The prints are printed on an Epson 10000CF wide format printer using archival pigmented inks with extreme longevity characteristics."

"Every child needs a little make believe."

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Well Being: Healing Wisdom, Recipes & Remedies:

In Relationship with our Bodies

By Lara Johnson

Throughout the course of our lives, we are entrusted with the responsibility of cultivating a relationship to ourselves and our bodies. For many of us, there are times this relationship can feel tenuous, difficult, and diminishing. This is particularly true when we first become aware of who we are in the scope of the world, as is the case in early adolescence. Unfortunately, our younger years are typically when we are most vulnerable to external pressures—societal, cultural, familial—and we may hide or actively go against our own Self.

For some, this might mean trying to reel in parts of ourselves so that we fit in among our peers. For others, this could look like suppression of certain bodily instincts, urges (like hunger or crying), or emotions. Others may push themselves beyond their own good, maybe to a place of sickness, in order to excel and achieve academically, musically, athletically, etc.

When we are young, we don't have much understanding yet of life's seasons and cycles. Moreover, we have yet to realize that we will change and the world will change, again and again. In time, we soften into who we are, becoming aware of our unique composition and gifts.

Building a healthy relationship with ourself usually takes many cycles and seasons of life. It is typically a non-linear process and is shaped by our experiences. It is also highly influenced by the people who love, mentor, and guide us.

As parents and caregivers, we can love and support in many ways. Most of us are probably well-versed in sharing wisdom through words and conversation. Much guidance can be communicated through our stories and advice. We can also teach and model in other ways as well. In certain instances, other methods of teaching stretch far beyond words. For example, we can tell our child not to worry so much, but in reality it is very difficult, and rather roundabout, to talk ourselves (or someone else) into relaxation. It can be much more effective to help ourselves relax by going directly through the body—such as with yoga or massage—in order to lead the mind into relaxation.

Simply put, our bodies respond to the language of touch and care. They respond to safe environments, sounds, and people. Do you remember when your child was an infant? Infants may not understand the words we speak, but they feel and sense the tone of our voice, the way we hold them, the energy present in the room. These hidden conversations are what infants are most fluent in.

How do we help our children develop a healthy and caring relationship with themselves? It will be different for each child and parent-child relationship. Broadly, it will likely involve an integration of words, conversation, and embodied practices. Children pick up on what their parents embody and practice, and how they communicate verbally. So join together to try out different tools and practices. Below are some I've developed for my own daily life.

Develop a line of communication

When we take time to pause, rest, and listen inward, we begin to see all the subtle ways our bodies try to communicate with us. Not only do our bodies tell us when they are hungry or tired, but much more as well. For example, they know when they don't feel safe in a certain situation or environment. They communicate through quiet signs and symptoms when we are lonely, stagnant, out of alignment, depressed, or disconnected. However, our lives involve a lot of busyness and stress, so most of us don't realize what is silently brewing until it shows up in a big way. It is simply hard to hear the quiet calls when there is a lot going on.

We can begin to develop or re-develop communication with our bodies by taking a little time each day to listen to them "speak". You might start with simple things: a daily body scan, a morning check-in, quiet time before bed, mindful meals (so that we can better listen for when we are full). Try one or two practices a week to find a practice that resonates. Then try it daily for a week or two and notice what changes.

Affirmations

Affirmations help strengthen our ability to meet ourselves with love and care. They help direct the internal conversation, orienting us toward a healthy and supportive internal dialogue. We can say, "I am here, my Love. I am listening." Or, "It's okay. It is normal to feel this way." Or, "I give you permission to be who you are." Or, "I am strong. I can and will get through anything."

We fortify our mantras with consistency, repetition, and/or by placing our hands on our heart, feeding the mantra into our heart space.

Enlist a care team

It takes a village to raise a child, and it also takes a village to care for ourselves. Make a list with your children of different people, places, and refuges you can seek out when you need support.

You might consider physical therapy, yoga, or some type of bodywork such as massage. Or you might dedicate a tree in the backyard to be a healing space—a place where everyone in your family can go from time to time for a hug or to bring their worries and sadness, longings and dreams. You may want to help your child cultivate caring relationships with other family members or community members who can guide and support them in other ways.

Finger holds

Holding our fingers is a simple form of bodywork that children seem to do naturally (think of a child sucking on his thumb to soothe himself). In Jin Shin Jyutsu, a Japanese method of healing based on the energetic flows in the body, holding different fingers affects different organs and emotions. This is congruent with Chinese medicine, which understands each organ as housing a different emotion.

To help with worry and anxiety, hold your thumb. To work with fear, hold your pointer finger. To work with anger, hold your middle finger. Holding your ring finger helps with loss and grief, while holding your little finger helps with over-efforting.

To practice the finger holds, relax the fingers of your other hand around the finger you want to hold. These holds are most potent when we breathe and feel, allowing ourselves to rest in this way for a few minutes. I like to hold my fingers when I am lying down for a short rest or when trying to fall asleep at night. I also go to the finger holds when I feel a challenging emotion arising within me.

Lara Johnson, AHC, RYT, is a certified yoga teacher and Ayurvedic Health Counselor, and has spent many years working with children. She has a Masters in Wild Writing, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Chinese Medicine & Acupuncture.



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Announcements

continued from page 8

5:00pm. Free space for families to come with their children (age 4 and under), to play and socialize with other families while getting out of the heat. A variety of toys and books are available, and plenty of space for movement. Weekly through September 2. Info: https://ccetompkins.org/events/2025/11/17/family-open-play.

LGBTQ+ Youth Group
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30-5:45pm. Join us to do crafts, play games, and socialize. Whether you're lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning, or just trying to figure things out—we're here for you! Registration is not required; feel free to join us! Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/lgbtq-youth-group-61525.

Tabletop RPG Brainstorming Group
Tompkins County Public Library, 6:00pm. Adults and teens. A gathering of the gaming community to support each other's creativity: Support all levels of experience; brainstorm ideas; design encounters & mechanics; talk out challenging game issues; share techniques, tools & triumphs. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/tabletop-role-playing-game-brainstorming-group-65415.

3 Thursday

NARCAN Training
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Join the REACH Project to learn how to recognize an overdose, respond to an overdose emergency, and administer NARCAN. This skill could help you save a life. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/copy-narcan-training-reach-64803.

Downtown Summer Concert Series
Bernie Milton Pavilion, Ithaca Commons, Thursdays, 5:00-8:00pm. Free and fun for the entire family. Featuring local, regional, and national acts in a wide variety of genres including jazz, blues, reggae, hip-hop, rock, and more. Info/lineup: https://www.downtownithaca.com/summer-concert-series/.

4 Friday

Hupstate Circus Festival: To the Moon & Back
Avenue of the Friends at Tompkins County Public Library, 3:00pm. A charming, silly, all-ages circus show with a handmade set and a creative, problem-solving adventure story. Learn more about the Festival at hupstatecircus.org.

7 Monday

Teen Maker Monday
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Participants will have the opportunity to learn and use Makerspace machines. A variety of crafting supplies will be available. This program is first come-first served for machines, materials, and assistance. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-maker-monday-54443.

8 Tuesday

Toddler & Preschool Art Studio
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:30am. Open exploration and discovery with a variety of art and crafting materials! Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/toddler-preschool-art-studio-64494.

Tween Book Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Join us to read and discuss great books together, play games, eat snacks, and laugh a lot. Best for ages 8-12. Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/tween-book-club-64810.

9 Wednesday

Kitchen Theatre Presents: N/A by Mario Corres
September 9-27. In the House Minority Leader's office, two brilliant and relentless women collide. A fiery, fast-paced two-hander that asks what it means to lead, and what it takes to save a country. Schedule/tickets: www.kitchentheatre.org.

10 Thursday

Story + Craft
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. A weekly reading and creating event for children! Join us for a read-aloud, followed by art-making or a guided craft. Best for children 5 and up, but

continued on page 16

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News & Notes

continued from page 7

Special Fall Events at Ithaca Children's Garden

Ithaca Children's Garden is an award-winning, three-acre public children's garden designed for kids, enjoyed by all, and driven by a mission to connect children to nature to create a more beautiful, resilient, and just world.

Tough Turtle Junior returns September 19, ready to challenge and delight Tompkins County's most adventurous young turtles. Designed for kids 12 and under, this exciting obstacle course invites Junior Tough Turtles to run, climb, leap, and crawl their way through a thrilling, nature-inspired course — all in a safe and encouraging environment. Test your turtle toughness as you race through the Garden, conquering obstacles like a hay-bale pyramid, a tunnel through the wildflower meadow, and even a leap off Gaia the giant turtle. After conquering the course, stick around to celebrate Gaia's Hatch Day.

Scarecrow Jubilee is ICG's annual outdoor autumn festival, held this year on October 17. Build your own scarecrow, carve pumpkins, enjoy live performances, activities and games, and make memories that will last for harvests to come. If you're looking for a free, family-friendly community event this coming fall season, make Scarecrow Jubilee your destination. To learn more about these events and the Children's Garden, visit www.ithacachildrensgarden.org.

44th Annual Apple Harvest Festival is September 25-27

A beloved seasonal tradition, this downtown Ithaca Festival features local farms, cider, baked goods, handmade crafts, food vendors, live entertainment, fall flavors, and plenty of apples. This year, the Great Apple Pie Eating contest returns, with competitors racing through Hollenbeck's pies for first-, second-, and third-place medals while every entry supports The History Center in Tompkins County. Visit https://www.downtownithaca.com/apple-harvest-festival/#ahf-schedule for the schedule and all the details, plus photos and video from past festivals.

Submit Your Items to News & Notes

Ithaca Child welcomes submissions for our column. You can mail them to Ithaca Child, PO Box 242, Etna, NY 13062 or Fax: 607-347-4302 or email to jgraney@twcny.rr.com

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Asking the Right Questions

By Tricia Thomas

At the ripe old age of (almost) four, my little guy can have respectably detailed conversations. It's great—he's hilarious, curious, and strangely insightful. On the way to camp, he tells me about dump trucks and the Coast Guard, asks about ocean waves and trees, then randomly asks some deep question about the universe that leaves me struggling to provide an answer. The twenty-five-minute drive from home to his camp is one of the most treasured parts of my day.

But coming home from camp? That's another story. I'll ask him if his day went well, and mostly, I'll get one or two word answers. Some of that is to be expected; after all, playing all day in a chaotic, constantly-changing environment is hard work for a little human body. But for someone who is so chatty most of the time and who seems—at least most days—to love camp, it feels strange to receive so little communication from him.

For the first few weeks of camp, I pressed for answers. But after weeks of pulling teeth, I allowed the silence to take over. Maybe he simply didn't want to talk. Perhaps he would tell me later, if and when he wanted me to know something.

But then I came across an interesting side post online on the subject of asking questions. The post pointed out that *how* questions are worded is more important than what we're asking. When we ask yes or no questions, we get yes and no answers. We haven't provided the parameters for a

continued on page 18



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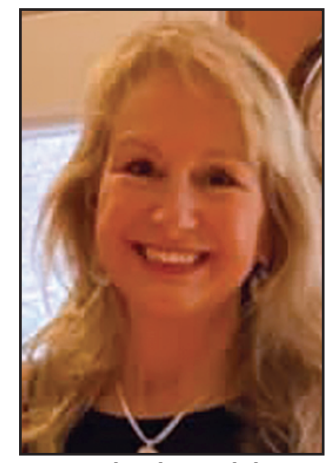

Kimberly Welch, MSN, PNP
Pediatric Nurse Practitioner with over 25 years primary care experience, specializing in breastfeeding families, among other concerns.



Wali M. Ahmadzai, M.S., P.A - C
Father of five with over 22 years experience. Fluent in English, Pashto, Dari, Farsi, and Urdu.



Connor Maile, M.S., P.A - C
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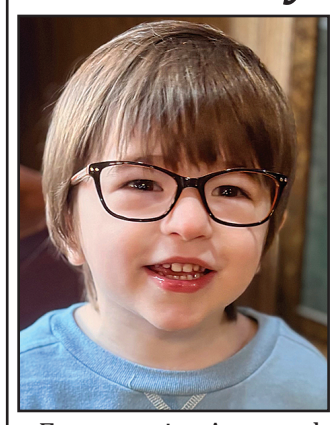

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Announcements

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younger are welcome with an adult to assist. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/story-craft-63280.

11 Friday

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for great stories, crafts, snacks, songs, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworth-library.org.

12 Saturday

Paws to Read
Southworth Library, 10:30am. Join the Cornell Canine Companions for an hour filled with furry friends, good stories, and a chance to practice your reading. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Festival Storytime
Freeville Harvest Festival, 10:30am. Join Ms. Laura, Bluey, and friends for this special storytime and a FREE Bluey book, while supplies last. Info: www.southworth-library.org.

We Declare: A Storytelling Project for Our Times
Tompkins County Public Library, 2:00pm. Local writers will perform their short, personal stories written in response to phrases taken from the Declaration of Independence, providing a snapshot into this moment in American history, a period with uncanny parallels to 1776. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/we-declare-storytelling-project-our-times-62879.

End-of-Summer Concert & Dance: Ageless Jazz Band
Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, 7:00pm. Free! Refreshments served and cash bar. This incredible 18-piece Big Band has been lighting up the stage for over 40 years! Info: https://www.tburgarts.org/event-calendar.

14 Monday

Singsong Music Class Series
Tompkins County Public Library, 10:00am. Ages 1-5. Four sessions. SingSong is a fun-filled class for little ones and parents/caregivers to enjoy music together in a circle setting. Featuring songs from near and far, different cultures, and a variety of languages! Registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/singsong-music-class-series-64871.

15 Tuesday

Jennie's Book Club
Southworth Library, 10:00am. This month we're reading *The Book Woman's Daughter* by Kim Michele Richardson. All are welcome! Info: www.southworth-library.org.

Pokémon Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Ages 5-14. Join us to learn and play the trading card game, participate in Pokémon-themed activities, meet fellow Trainers, and more. Space is limited – please register to hold your spot: https://www.tcpl.org/event/pokemon-club-64421.

Comic Book Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 6:30pm. The Comic Book Club of Ithaca is the oldest continuously-running comic book club in the country. It meets the first and third Tuesdays of the month, and meetings are free and open to pop culture fans of all ages. More info here: https://www.tcpl.org/event/comic-book-club-ithaca-63872 and here: www.comicbookclub.org.

17 Thursday

Family Concert Series
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Featuring a different children's book each time, and a variety of instruments that help bring the tale to life in a very musical way with musicians from the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra. Children will have an opportunity to try out the instruments, too. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/cayuga-chamber-orchestra-family-concert-series-64884.

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Fun Fall Activities

continued from page 10

serve the gorgeous hues of changing leaves. Take some photos, and when you return home encourage your kids to draw or paint pictures based on what they saw. You could also organize a digital slideshow of your photos or print them to create collages. Another fun idea is to collect some of the fallen leaves and bring them home for art projects.

Volunteering

This is also a great time of year to get outdoors and give back to others. When we spread kindness throughout our community, we actually experience a physiological change called a "helper's high". These positive feelings are heightened when we are volunteering outside and connecting with nature.

There are numerous ways to volunteer outdoors in your community. Contact a local farm to see if they need help with chores—weeding, planting, sifting compost, digging, watering, etc. Seek out or organize a gleaning project, which involves picking leftover crops from a farmer's field after it has been commercially harvested, and donating the produce locally. You could go to a u-pick farm and then donate what you gather to a local food bank or put together gift baskets for people in the hospital. Look for beach, river, or park clean-ups near you and register as a family. Offer to rake leaves or do some garden cleanup for a sick or elderly neighbor – it's a great way to get your kids involved in community service and see results right away.

I hope you'll take advantage of all that the fall season has to offer – you'll build family memories that will last a lifetime!

Sandi Schwartz is an author, journalist, and mother of two. Her new book, Finding Ecohappiness: Fun Nature Activities to Help Your Kids Feel Happier and Calmer, *comes out in the spring. Learn more at www.ecohappinessproject.com.*

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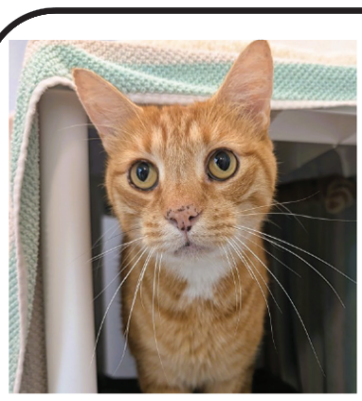
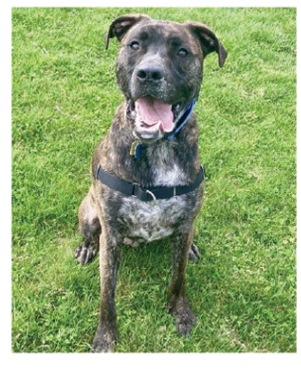


Basil is a born survivor, and he'll happily tell you all about it while you're hanging out with him at our Adoption center. He comes to us as an outdoor cat with no known history with other animals, but what we do know is that he's a great communicator who isn't hampered by silly things like gravity! He'll leap straight up to your level to let you know what's on his mind, and if you happen to have a tasty little treat, then you won't have to reach very far to share!

Basil

Zeke is a big guy who appreciates life on the go, go, go! At just around 2 and a half years old, and 77lbs, he's got an even bigger heart and love of rugged toys that he'd love to share with you. He's super friendly and smart, with a ready handful of tricks that he's happy to demonstrate for a tasty treat (or two)!
Zeke's on the lookout for friends who love rambling walks as much as he does, and he's been known to get along with similarly friendly, bouncy dogs. Why not stop in and say hello to our big brindle baby?



Zeke

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Right Questions

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better answer. When kids are tired, it's hard for them to create conversation out of thin air. When asked, "Did you have a good day?" a child's mind takes the path of least resistance—yes or no. But when you reframe the question – "What was your favorite activity today?" – you give your child the parameters to answer the question in a meaningful way. It doesn't require their tired brain to infer parental meaning and deliver a detailed recitation.

I was curious to try it out. The next time my son climbed into the minivan, backpack flopping off one shoulder in his hurry to toss it onto the floor, I paused and considered a different way to ask him about his day. I asked him what his favorite part of the day had been, what friends he played with most, and if anything made him sad. Did it magically fix everything and leave him singing like a bird? No, of course not; he was still tired from a long day. But I did see his eyes light up as he traveled back to a memory of playing with a particular friend. His voice rose with excitement while he talked about playing with water and trucks outside in the afternoon. When I offered the roadmap for sharing his world with me, he took it gladly.

Now that school is right around the corner, asking the right questions is more important than ever. Whether your child is just entering preschool or is halfway through high school, developing connection starts with the little things – the small moments of connection on the drive home from school, or the chatter at the dinner table, or even those final few minutes before bed, when all is quiet. If we learn to do the heavy lifting in conversations, it will give our kids one more reason to be open with us. Pointed, specific questions not only allow us to go deeper with our kids; they also advertise our clear interest in their wellbeing. "How was your day" might sound like a knee-jerk question, but "What happened at softball without Sarah covering second base?" feels personal, invested, and prepped for a real answer.

If you want to change up your conversations with your kids this year, I invite you to try this. Be specific in your wording. Ask thoughtful questions that encourage your children to respond with details. It might just help you enter their world.

Tricia Thomas holds a master's degree in mental health counseling and a specialist degree in education.

Summer Adventures

continued from page 6

variety of nutritious, satisfying, vegetarian *tiffins* and meals all day long. Some are open until 1:00am, catering to the late night crowd including students and shift workers. Most of these cafes offer standing room only or very limited seating, to facilitate quick turnover and accommodate a clientele always in a rush. Unless there's a bench or ledge near a tree outside or patio seating, customers eat quickly at one of the standing tables and go about their day.

A typical visit might go like this: You first pay at the counter, and then take your receipt to the serving station. "One plate *idli-vada ri*." (*Ri* is a Kannada suffix used to convey respect. In this context, it implies both "please" and respect rolled into one syllable).

The server asks the all-important question: "*Sambar* Dip *ah*? (*Ah* roughly translates to "Is it?") I actually think this is a pithy way of saying, "Do you want your *idlis* soaked in the rich, sweet-sour, tamarind-infused stew of deliciousness, or would you like it on the side so that you can also enjoy the chutney made with freshly-grated coconut and green chili?" Like Meg Ryan's Sally, I like to order things "on the side." "Separate-*ri*!"

We then visited my husband Ram's family in New Delhi. The capital has lots of noteworthy places to visit, but it was so hot that we didn't feel like exerting ourselves too much. We relaxed at home in an air-conditioned room and discussed all the family news avidly while my sister-in-law supplied us with delicious meals and snacks at regular intervals.

Five days later we were back in Bengaluru. It was time to wrap up our trip. We visited Karnataka Bhel House for the best *masala puri* in town! Then on to Corner House for their signature "Death by Chocolate"—warm brownies heaped with vanilla ice cream, chocolate sauce, and crushed peanuts.

That's it for now, dear readers. I wish you many sweet moments as warm summer days make way for crisp Autumn nights. For now, *Lehitraot!* Or as the Kannadigas like to say, "*Matthe Sigona*" (Let's meet again soon.)

Jayasri Srinivasan is a regular Ithaca Child contributor.

ArtStart

continued from page 4

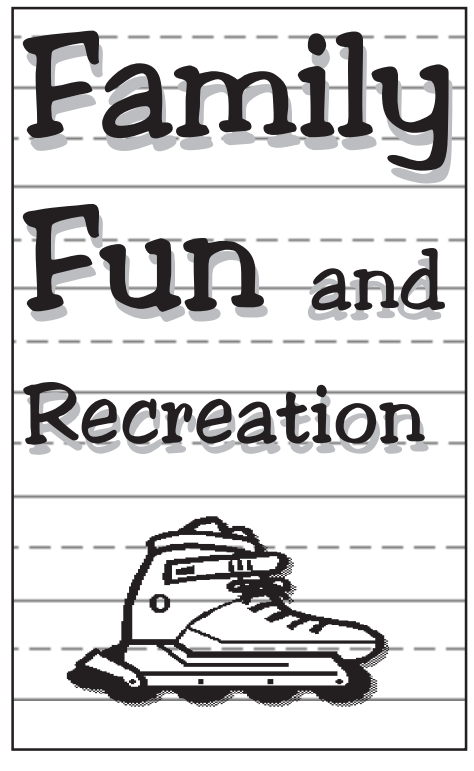
6 Peeps bunny marshmallows
1⁄3 cup brown sugar
1 1⁄4 cup chocolate chips or M&M candies
Directions for assembly:
1. Place graham crackers in a food-storage bag and crush them with a rolling pin or heavy drinking glass.
2. Add the crumbs to the bottom of the mason jar.
3. Place the Peeps around the inside of the jar, facing out.
4. Add the brown sugar inside and behind the Peeps. Pack tightly.
5. Add the chocolate chips or M&Ms on top and seal the jar.
Directions for baking:
1. Empty the jar into a large bowl, then set the Peeps aside. Combine other ingredients well.
2. Cut marshmallows into small pieces with scissors and stir into dry ingredients.
3. Melt 1/2 cup butter and add to mix along with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Mix well.
4. Press lightly into greased 9-by-9-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

• *Chocolate chip cookie mix*
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp salt
3/4 tsp baking soda
6 ounces chocolate chips
Directions for assembly:
Layer flour, brown sugar, white sugar, chocolate chips, salt, and baking soda to give your jar white and brown stripes.
Directions for baking:
Empty the jar into a bowl. Add 3/4 cup softened butter, 1 egg, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Stir with a spatula or wooden spoon until ingredients are well-combined. Drop by the tablespoon or with a cookie scoop on a parchment paper-lined cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 9-10 minutes or until just very lightly browned.

Pam Molnar is a writer, foodie, and mom of three. She loves to plan parties of any kind. For more party ideas, follow her on Etsy at Pam's Party Printables.







Announcements

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Memoir Kickstart
Buffalo Street Books, 6:00pm. Learn how to get your memoir started! Presented by Story House Ithaca. Info: https://www.storyhouseithaca.org.

Books, Beer, and Baking
Hopshire Farm & Brewery, 7:00pm. Come learn about baking with beer! Guest speaker Marion Ferrer will provide some delicious samples of cheddar stout scones, dark chocolate stout cake, and seeded crackers. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

18 Friday

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for great stories, crafts, snacks, songs, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Teen Studio
Johnson Museum of Art, 4:00–6:00pm. Free. Unleash your creativity, experiment with an array of materials, and have fun alongside your peers. Drop by the Museum's Cox Studio on Floor 2L for artistic inspiration in a stress-free environment, with snacks provided. Facilitated by Cornell undergraduate fine-arts majors and open to all middle and high school students. Info: museum.cornell.edu.

19 Saturday

Tough Turtle Junior
Ithaca Children's Garden. Designed for kids 12 and under, this exciting obstacle course invites Junior Tough Turtles to run, climb, leap, and crawl their way through a thrilling, nature-inspired course—all in a safe and encouraging environment. Info: https://www.ithacachildrensgarden.org/portfolio/tough-turtle-junior/

Homestead Heritage Day Storytime
Southworth Homestead, 10:30am. Join Ms. Laura, Bluey, and friends for this special storytime and a FREE Bluey book, while supplies last. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Family Workshop: Architecture Adventures
Johnson Museum of Art, 1:00–3:00pm. Explore the Museum's I. M. Pei building on indoor and outdoor scavenger hunts and other family-based activities, including a *Cosmos* collage project in the studio. All ages are welcome at this free family program. Info: museum.cornell.edu.

Parents Night Out
Finger Lakes Gymnastics Center, 4:00-8:00pm. Ages 4+. Featuring open gym, gymnastics, highly trained coaches, ninja, pizza, and a G-rated movie. Registration: https://fingerlakesgymnasticscenter.com/pno.

Fall Guitar Concert Series: Kinloch Nelson & Muriel Anderson
Trumansburg Conservatory of Fine Arts, 7:00pm. Kinloch Nelson has experience in an impressive number of genres including classical, ragtime, American primitive, Celtic, new-age, R&B, and rock. Muriel Anderson is renowned for her expertise on the 20-string harp-guitar. Tickets: https://www.tburgarts.org/event-calendar.

Ira Glass: Stories for a Saturday Night
State Theatre, 8:00pm. The *This American Life* host brings a night of storytelling in the style he pioneered on his hit radio show. Whether you're a longtime fan of the show or discovering his work for the first time, you're in for an evening of funny and moving stories about people who may as well be your neighbors, your friends, or you. Tickets: https://stateofithaca.org.

20 Sunday

Porchfest 2026
Fall Creek & Northside neighborhoods. Porchfest is a free music festival that is open for anyone to attend or perform. Performances take place on porches, and in yards and driveways, in a celebration of our vibrant creative community. Learn more, volunteer, donate, and more at https://www.porchfest.org.

21 Monday

School Break Day with Primitive Pursuits
4-H Acres, 9:00am-3:00pm. Join us outside to enjoy the best the natural world has to offer! Spend your day playing games, telling stories, carving, building shelters, cooking on campfires, and making crafts with materials we find in the forest. An all-outdoor, all-weather program for ages 5-12. Registration: https://primitivepursuits.com/school-breaks/.

22 Tuesday

Early Readers Book Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 3:00pm. Grades K-2. Designed for children who are learning to read or beginning to read independently, this program helps young readers build confidence as they transition from leveled readers to chapter books. Registration required: https://www.tcpl.org/event/early-reader-book-club-65800.

LEGO Family Build Night
Tompkins County Public Library, 5:30pm. Buckets of LEGO will be provided for participants to borrow for their builds. Participants will also have the opportunity to display their creations in the Youth Services section for one week. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/lego-family-build-night-64442.

23 Wednesday

LGBTQ+ Youth Group
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Join us to do crafts, play games, and socialize. Whether you're lesbian, gay, bi, trans, questioning, or just trying to figure things out—we're here for you. Registration is not required; feel free to join us! Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/lgbtq-youth-group-61528.

25 Friday

Apple Harvest Festival
Downtown Ithaca, September 25-27. Featuring local farms, apple growers, cider, baked goods, handmade crafts, food vendors, live entertainment, and community activities, the festival celebrates the harvest season while highlighting the businesses, restaurants, shops, artists, and community partners that make Downtown Ithaca a year-round destination. Info: https://www.downtownithaca.com/apple-harvest-festival/#ahf-about.

Preschool Storytime
Southworth Library, Fridays at 10:00am. Join Ms. Laura and friends for great stories, crafts, snacks, songs, and a giveaway book. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Stitch Club
Tompkins County Public Library, every other Friday at 1:00pm. Adults and teens 16+. An opportunity for knitters, crocheters, needle-pointers, and other stitchers of all levels to come together and work, and share projects, skills, and advice. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/copy-stitch-club-62306.

26 Saturday

Miss Angie's Music & Movement
Southworth Library, 10:30am. Bring the kids to get their toes tapping and their

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Racker
Day in the Park
SATURDAY
AUGUST
29TH
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SENSORY PATHWAY!
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LAWN GAMES! FOOD TRUCKS!
FREE ICE CREAM!
Check out www.racker.org for all upcoming events in 2026 & 2027!
LEARN MORE AT:
www.racker.org/dayinthepark

Announcements

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bodies moving with songs and stories. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Family Tour: Fantastical Creatures
Johnson Museum of Art, 1:00-2:00pm. Join the Museum's student educators to explore the galleries through special stories and your own senses. Meet seven-headed snakes, three-headed deer, and an ancient phoenix during this family-friendly tour. Info: museum.cornell.edu.

27 Sunday

Hamilton Singalong and Karaoke Brunch
Auburn Public Theater, 2:00pm. All-ages and uncensored. This isn't open mic karaoke – it's a fully-structured Hamilton experience where fans step into the roles and the entire room sings every word. Brunch will be available on site at Cafe 108. Info/tickets: www.auburnpublictheater.org/events.

28 Monday

Silent Book Club
Southworth Library, 6:30pm. This month's featured book is *A Daughter of Fair Verona* by Christina Dodd. Free copies of this book will be available, or bring a book of your own and enjoy some snacks and quiet reading time at the Library. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

Art & Writing for Kids
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:30pm. Learn to observe a work of art and explore, interpret, or turn it into something new in this immersive and interactive workshop for ages 8-12. Registration required: https://www.tcpl.org/event/art-and-writing-kids-workshop-65846.

29 Tuesday

Broadway in Binghamton Presents: Mystic Pizza
Forum Theater, September 29 and 30 at 7:30pm. Based on the beloved 1988 rom-com that launched the career of Julia Roberts, *Mystic Pizza* is a new musical featuring hit songs from the 80s and 90s. Tickets: https://nacentertainment.com/broadway-in-binghamton-mystic-pizza/.

October

1 Thursday

NARCAN Training
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Join the REACH Project to learn how to recognize an overdose, respond to an overdose emergency, and administer NARCAN. This skill could help you save a life. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/copy-narcan-training-reach-64804.

AI: Fact vs Fiction
Southworth Library, 6:30pm. Join Peter John Loewen, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and Professor of Government at Cornell, for a conversation. Info: www.southworthlibrary.org.

2 Friday

Autumn BioBlitz
October 2-5. Virtual, on your own time – join us from wherever you are in the Cayuga Lake basin! We are calling all nature observers to document the life around us using the iNaturalist app. This event is part of our series of seasonal bioblitzes, to help document the diversity of life in our region over time as the climate and other factors change. You don't need to be an expert to participate! Questions? Contact Ingrid Zabel at zabel@priweb.org.

continued on page 22

JILLIAN'S DRAWERS & mama goose



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- **Scheduling Birthday Parties** any age, for up to 15 kids. Call to make reservations.
- **Summer Open Play Time for all ages will be Tues & Thurs 10-1.** $10 per child! Check our online calendar for Fall, Winter & Spring days, times and possible changes.
- **Group Rentals** - available during the week. Call to make reservations.

Check our online schedule for 2026 updates
Visit our website for more information
www.eastlakerecreation.com
or call 277-2151, 18 Eastlake Rd., Ithaca

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- Offering Playtimes and Events
- Visit **www.fingerlakestoylibrary.org** to learn more

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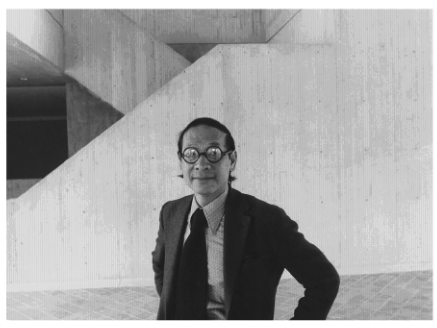
Ithaca, NY 14850

JOHNSON MUSEUM OF ART
Architecture Adventures



Saturday, September 19, 1-3PM
Explore the Johnson's I. M. Pei building on indoor and outdoor scavenger hunts and other family-based art activities
All ages welcome at this free program!
Visit museum.cornell.edu for more info
ADMISSION IS ALWAYS FREE



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Announcements

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3 Saturday

Youth Naturalist Series
Lime Hollow Nature Center, 9:00am-3:00pm. Monthly outdoor adventures for ages 6-12. Our experienced instructors will take kids off the beaten path to explore hidden trails, discover the wonders of the wild, and master real outdoor skills in a safe, supportive environment. This year's focus: carving! Info/schedule: https://www.limehollow.org/youth-naturalist-series.

5 Monday

Teen Maker Monday
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Participants will have the opportunity to learn and use Makerspace machines. A variety of crafting supplies will be available. This program is first come-first served for machines, materials, and assistance. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-maker-monday-54443.

6 Tuesday

Teen & Tween Graphic Novel Book Club
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. A monthly meetup to socialize, eat snacks, and talk about graphic novels! Learn more at https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-tween-graphic-novel-book-club-65095.

7 Wednesday

Tabletop RPG Brainstorming Group
Tompkins County Public Library, 6:00pm. Adults and teens. A gathering of the gaming community to support each other's creativity: Support all levels of experience; brainstorm ideas; design encounters & mechanics; talk out challenging game issues; share techniques, tools & triumphs. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/tabletop-role-playing-game-brainstorming-group-65415.

8 Thursday

Family Concert Series
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00pm. Featuring a different children's book each time, and a variety of instruments that help bring the tale to life in a very musical way with musicians from the Cayuga Chamber Orchestra. Children will have an opportunity to try out the instruments, too. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/cayuga-chamber-orchestra-family-concert-series-64886.

DSP Shows Presents: Brad Williams—the Tall Tales Tour
State Theatre, 7:00pm. Williams started doing stand-up comedy as a teenager and has been touring successfully ever since, routinely selling out prestigious venues all over the country and world. His first one-hour special, *Fun Size*, was the highest rated special on Showtime. Tickets: https://stateofithaca.org.

9 Friday

Stitch Club
Tompkins County Public Library, every other Friday at 1:00pm. Adults and teens 16+. An opportunity for knitters, crocheters, needle-pointers, and other stitchers of all levels to come together and work, and share projects, skills, and advice. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/copy-stitch-club-62306.

Ithaca College Theatre Presents: Anton Chekov's *Three Sisters*
Clark Theatre, October 9-13. The production finds the Prozorov family in the Soviet Union of the mid-1980s, during the uneasy early years of Glasnost and Perestroika. Schedule/tickets: https://www.ithaca.edu/academics/school-music-theatre-and-dance/center-theatre-and-dance-productions.

10 Saturday

Family Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 11:00am. Children of all ages and their caregivers are invited to celebrate reading and build early literacy skills with stories, songs, and hands-on fun. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/family-storytime-63214.

Steve Gonsalves Live: A Life With Ghosts
Hangar Theatre, 6:30pm. An immersive evening of hauntings, history, and true tales from Steve's revealing archive. The evening also includes humor, audience interaction, and a live Q&A. Tickets: https://hangartheatre.org/event/a-life-with-ghosts/.

11 Sunday

DSP Shows Presents: Fred Armisen—Comedy for Musicians But Everyone is Welcome
State Theatre, 7:00pm. Fred Armisen is a comedian, writer, producer, and musician. He is an 11-season veteran of *Saturday Night Live*, and for 10 years was band leader of the 8G Band on *Late Night With Seth Meyers*. He was in the original cast of *All In: Comedy About Love* on Broadway. Tickets: https://stateofithaca.org.

12 Monday

School Break Day with Primitive Pursuits
4-H Acres, 9:00am-3:00pm. Join us outside to enjoy the best the natural world has to offer! Spend your day playing games, telling stories, carving, building shelters, cooking on campfires, and making crafts with materials we find in the forest. An all-outdoor, all-weather program for ages 5-12. Registration: https://primitivepursuits.com/school-breaks/.

14 Wednesday

Animal Sleepover Storytime
Tompkins County Public Library, 6:00pm. Join us for a pajama storytime, then send your stuffed animal on an after-hours library adventure! Children can pick up their animals and a postcard of their late-night escapades the next day. Info/registration: https://www.tcpl.org/event/animal-sleepover-storytime-65700.

Kitchen Theatre Presents: *Something About Money* by Alexander Thomas
October 14-25. A funny, surprising, and personal solo performance that will make you laugh, cry, and question your entire relationship to money. Schedule/tickets: www.kitchentheatre.org.

16 Friday

Ithaca College Theatre Presents: Sender
McCarroll Theater, October 16-18. This stunningly frank, full-hearted dramedy asks us to confront the hard truths we run away from, and shines a light on what adulthood really means: moving forward. Schedule/tickets: https://www.ithaca.edu/academics/school-music-theatre-and-dance/center-theatre-and-dance-productions.

17 Saturday

Scarecrow Jubilee
Ithaca Children's Garden, 1:00-4::0pm. Build your own scarecrow, carve pumpkins, laugh during a puppet show, dance to live music, enjoy activities and games, and make memories that will last for harvests to come. If you've been looking for a free, family-friendly community event this coming fall season, make Scarecrow Jubilee your destination. Info: https://www.ithacachildrensgarden.org/portfolio/scarecrow-jubilee/.

Parents Night Out
Finger Lakes Gymnastics Center, 4:00-

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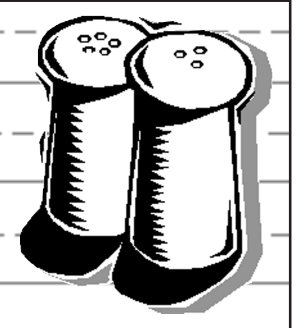
The Family Table



GreenStar Food Co+op

Chicken and Penne in Cream

This delicious recipe is made with just 5 ingredients for an easy weeknight meal. Cook a couple extra chicken breasts as part of your weekly meal prep and it comes together in minutes. Cream transforms into a luscious pasta sauce when combined in a hot pan with Parmesan cheese.

Recipe Information
Total Time: 20 minutes, 10 minutes active
Servings: 8



Ingredients

- 3 cups cooked chicken, chopped
- 1 pound penne pasta, uncooked
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 3/4 cup shredded Parmesan Cheese

Preparation

1. Boil a large pot of salted water for the penne. Cook the pasta according to package directions. During the last 5 minutes, add the frozen peas. Drain well.
2. In the same pot, pour in the cream and turn the heat to medium-high. Add the chicken and stir as the cream starts to bubble, then add the drained pasta. Stir and toss over the heat until the pasta is coated and the cream is becoming thick, about 2 minutes.
3. Add 1/2 cup of the Parmesan and keep tossing over the heat to melt. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm with the remaining Parmesan sprinkled over the pasta.

Serving Suggestion

Dress up this recipe for company by serving with a crisp green salad and fresh bread.

Nutritional Information

530 calories, 16 g. fat, 0 mg. 160 mg. cholesterol, 550 mg. sodium, 54 g. carbohydrate, 1 g. fiber, 39 g. protein

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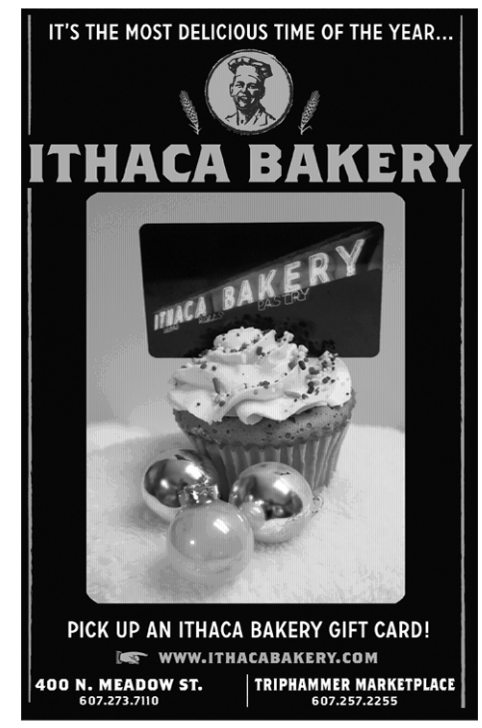

News Clips

By Allison Childs Wells

Children's Gut Health and PFAS

New research links early exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), commonly known as "forever chemicals," to increased intestinal inflammation in children. The findings, out of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and published in *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology* found that exposure to PFAS during critical stages of development may impact long-term intestinal risks including inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The research found that prenatal and early-life PFAS exposure is consistently associated with elevated levels of fecal calprotectin, an biomarker of gut inflammation commonly used to monitor IBD.

"While genetics play an important role in inflammatory bowel disease, they do not fully explain why the disease develops," says Manasi Agrawal, MD, MS. "Our findings suggest that prenatal and early-life PFAS exposure may contribute to intestinal inflammation during an important stage of development. Understanding these environmental influences may ultimately help us identify opportunities to reduce future disease risk before symptoms develop."

PFAS are a large family of synthetic chemicals used in nonstick cookware, food packaging, stain-resistant fabrics, and other everyday products. They persist in the environment and can accumulate in the human body over time, leading to widespread human exposure.

Source: https://www.technologynetworks.com/applied-sciences/news/early-life-exposure-to-forever-chemicals-linked-to-childhood-intestinal-inflammation-414785

Children Share Common Understanding of Geometry with Monkeys

Although non-human primates are considered to be among the smartest animals on earth—based on their ability to use tools, remember faces, and communicate with humans using sign language—advanced concepts like geometry have been thought of as beyond their grasp. A new study from Carnegie Mellon University sheds new light on humanity's closest cousins. "What surprised us wasn't just that monkeys could do the task," said Professor Jessica Cantlon, senior author of the study. "It was that monkeys, children, and adults seemed to think about geometric relationships in fundamentally the same way. That suggests these intuitions are part of the basic architecture of the primate mind."

In the study, researchers offered baboons and Rhesus macaques healthy snacks for participating in a touch-screen, geometric-shapes matching game, in which the shapes had no distinctive features or differences in color, size, or form. The same experiments were conducted on dozens of preschoolers, a group of Bolivian indigenous adults, and a group of American adults, and found that there was clear continuity in terms of how primates and humans thought about basic geometry.

"This study suggests that children start with deep, evolutionarily-ancient intuitions about shape and space. Education can build on those intuitions instead of treating geometry as something that has to be taught from scratch," says Cantlon.

Source: https://www.cmu.edu/news/stories/archives/2026/july/children-and-monkeys-share-a-common-understanding-of-geometry

Clue to Early Depression Hidden in Children's Eyes

Depression appears to change what children notice in the faces around them, but the effect depends on family history. New research from Binghamton University suggests that depression can influence how children respond to emotional faces, including happy and sad expressions, and that these attention patterns differ depending on whether a child has a family history of depression.

Earlier research has linked depression to greater attention toward sad facial expressions. However, those effects have generally been small, and researchers have not known whether these attention patterns contribute to depression or result from it. The new study is the first to examine how depressive symptoms and attention biases may influence one another over time in children.

The findings showed that increasing depressive symptoms affected children's attention differently depending on their family background. Among children whose mothers had a history of major depressive disorder, for example, growing depressive symptoms were associated with increased attention to sad faces. Lead author Kelly Gair noted that depression can have a powerful influence on what people notice in their environment. "We know that when you're depressed, it changes what you pay attention to."

Researchers are continuing to follow these children as they move into adolescence. The goal is to determine whether these attention patterns contribute to a higher likelihood of developing clinical depression later in life.

Source: https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2026/06/260616102214.htm

Keeping Little Ones Safe When It's Hot

Human-caused climate change is already resulting in longer, stronger, and more widespread heat waves—making it more challenging to keep children safe. Infants, toddlers, and young children need extra care in the heat. Why?

- Regulating body temperature is a challenge
- Children sweat less than adults and have a higher metabolism that makes them hot faster. In extreme heat, their higher surface area-to-mass ratio increases heat absorption.
- Kids also tend to spend more time outdoors.

On hot days, parents need to be vigilant about the signs of heat illness. A lack of tears or regular wet diapers could indicate your baby is dehydrated. Parents should feed infants in smaller quantities more frequently to make sure they are getting enough fluid. Keep an eye out for fatigue, flushed skin, and irritability, too; they don't necessarily signal illness, but they likely mean that your child needs a break to cool off. To protect young children:

- Keep them inside during the hottest parts of the day
- Dress them in loose, light-colored clothing
- Keep them plied with sunscreen and plenty of fluids, including water-drenched fruits like watermelon and strawberries.
- Avoid blankets or other covers over the stroller; they trap heat. Use a canopy instead.
- Never leave your child in a car; temps can rise quicky and dramatically
- Test all metal surfaces for temperature before letting it come into contact with a child's skin
- Remember: If you're hot, your baby is hot

Source: https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2026-07-20/how-to-keep-babies-safe-when-temperatures-soar

Allison Childs Wells is a regular Ithaca Child contributor.

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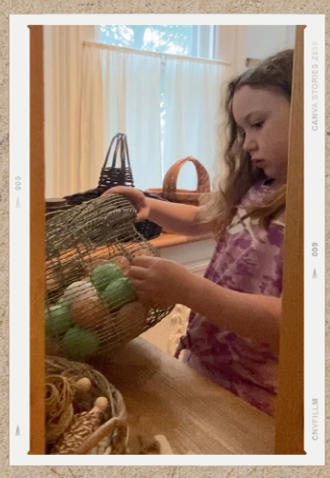

- Suggett House Museum
- Then & Now Children's Room
- Kellogg Memorial Research Center



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Summer Finale!

Groton Public Library 1896

Free Hotdogs & Popcorn!

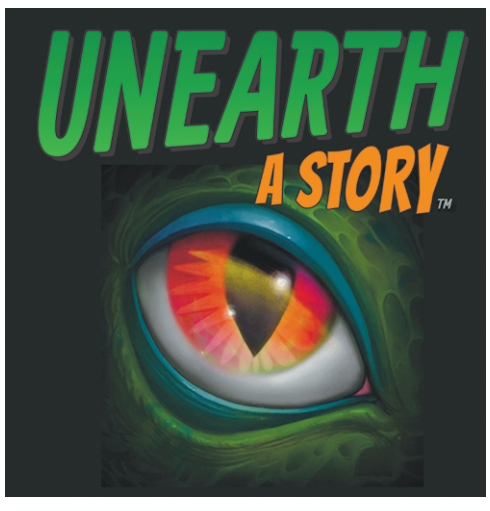
Saturday, August 22, Noon to 5pm at Groton Public Library

"Where Good Things Happen"

- Kids Coupons for **Free Book**!
- Adult/Teen Skull Game with Dice!
- Scavenger Hunt for Kids!
- Face Painting with Maria Montreuil from 12:30 to 4:30pm
- Physics Bus - Outside Front from 11:30 to 3:30 PM
- Science Tellers from 12:30 to 1:30pm
- Paul Krohn with his Dino presentation & Dino Craft from 2 to 3 PM



3D Printed Fossil Bookmarks





Nate Collins, Author of Frogs vs Toads @ noon to 5:00 PM

Ongoing for your enjoyment...

- **Free Family Movie Nights** at the Library every Friday at 5:30 pm with free popcorn too!
- **Healthy Tuesday Free Food Giveaway** happens every week on Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m.

We receive a large donation of food from Wegmans courtesy of the Friendship Donation Network.

These programs are made possible (in part) with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, administered by the Community Arts Partnership & the Rosen Library Fund administered by the Community Foundation of Tompkins County.

112 East Cortland St., Groton, NY
For more info please email: director@grotonpubliclibrary.org or call 607-898-5055
or visit us at https://grotonpubliclibrary.net/ or on Facebook for an updated list of events.

Back to School

continued from page 5

• A text to a friend. Write something simple like, "Hard morning over here. Missing you." Send it.
• Your own water bottle. Hydration is not optional. You'll feel better, have more energy, and be more patient when you're not dehydrated.

Shannon Dean is the mother of two sons. She enjoys writing about the health and happiness of families.

Reading List

continued from page 9

sistence, as well as the impact of kindnesses shown person to person. Beginning and ending with the sentence, "In this land of promise, we hope to find a place to belong," *Barbed Wire Between Us* faces our historical mistakes in the hopes we can learn from them, and look on those who are vulnerable with empathy. (Red Comet Press, 2026, ages 7-10)

Esty Schachter is a regular Ithaca Child contributor.

Announcements

continued from page 22

8:00pm. Ages 4+. Featuring open gym, gymnastics, highly trained coaches, ninja, pizza, and a G-rated movie. Registration: https://fingerlakesgymnasticscenter.com/pno.

18 Sunday

Family Classics Picture Show: The Ghost & Mr. Chicken (1966)
Cinemapolis, 2:30pm. Free! Starring Don Knotts. A timid typesetter hasn't a ghost of a chance of becoming a reporter—until he decides to solve a murder mystery and ends up spending a fright-filled night in a haunted house. Info: www.cinemapolis.org.

19 Monday

Teen Maker Monday
Tompkins County Public Library, 4:00-6:00pm. Participants will have the opportunity to learn and use Makerspace machines. A variety of crafting supplies will be available. This program is first come-first served for machines, materials, and assistance. Info: https://www.tcpl.org/event/teen-maker-monday-54443.

23 Friday

School Break Day with Primitive Pursuits
4-H Acres, 9:00am-3:00pm. Join us outside to enjoy the best the natural world has to offer! Spend your day playing games, telling stories, carving, building shelters, cooking on campfires, and making crafts with materials we find in the forest. An all-outdoor, all-weather program for ages 5-12. Registration: https://primitivepursuits.com/school-breaks/.

Dallas Morse Coors Concert Series: Chucho Valdés 85th Birthday Celebration
Bailey Hall, Cornell, 7:30pm. NEA Jazz Master and winner of seven Grammy and seven Latin Grammy Awards, the Cuban pianist, composer and arranger Chucho Valdés is the most influential figure in modern Afro-Cuban jazz. Tickets: https://www.cornellconcertseries.com/2627-season.

November

6 Friday

IC Theatre Presents: The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee
Hoerner Theatre, November 6-9. Winner of the Tony and the Drama Desk Awards for Best Book, The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee has charmed audiences across the country with its effortless wit and humor. Schedule/tickets: https://www.ithaca.edu/academics/school-music-theatre-and-dance/center-theatre-and-dance-productions.

Parents are encouraged to contact each event for age appropriateness.
Submit Calendar Items for the Family Services Directory issue coming out in early October no later than 9/18/26.
Fax: 607-347-4302
E-mail: jgraney@twcny.rr.com
Mail: PO Box 242, Etna NY 13062





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Ithaca Child – the paper for parents

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Inn on Columbia

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The Strebel Fund for Community Enrichment – Dedicated Advocates of the Ithaca Community

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CODDINGTON ROAD COMMUNITY CENTER one-and-a-half to five years. Half, Three Quarters and Full Day 7:30 am to 5:30pm. 277-1434.

ITHACA WALDORF SCHOOL Kindergarten through Elementary. Enrollment Applications available. Call 256-2020 or visit www.ithacawaldorf.org

DAY CARE IS A TOUGH DECISION. Find our why parents choose IC3. Ithaca Community Childcare Center. Enrolling. 579 Warren Rd., Ithaca. 257-0200.

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Foster Family

Become a Foster Parent

To anyone who may be considering becoming a foster parent and/or adoptive parent and wants more information, Tompkins County Department of Social Services has a significant need for homes for children of all ages and sibling groups.

If you desire further information, please call 274-5266

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SELL KIDS' CLOTHES (Sizes 0-14) at 269-0600 www.mamagooseithaca.com

SELL HOME ITEMS & FURNITURE at Mimi's Attic, 882-9038 www.mimisatticithaca.com

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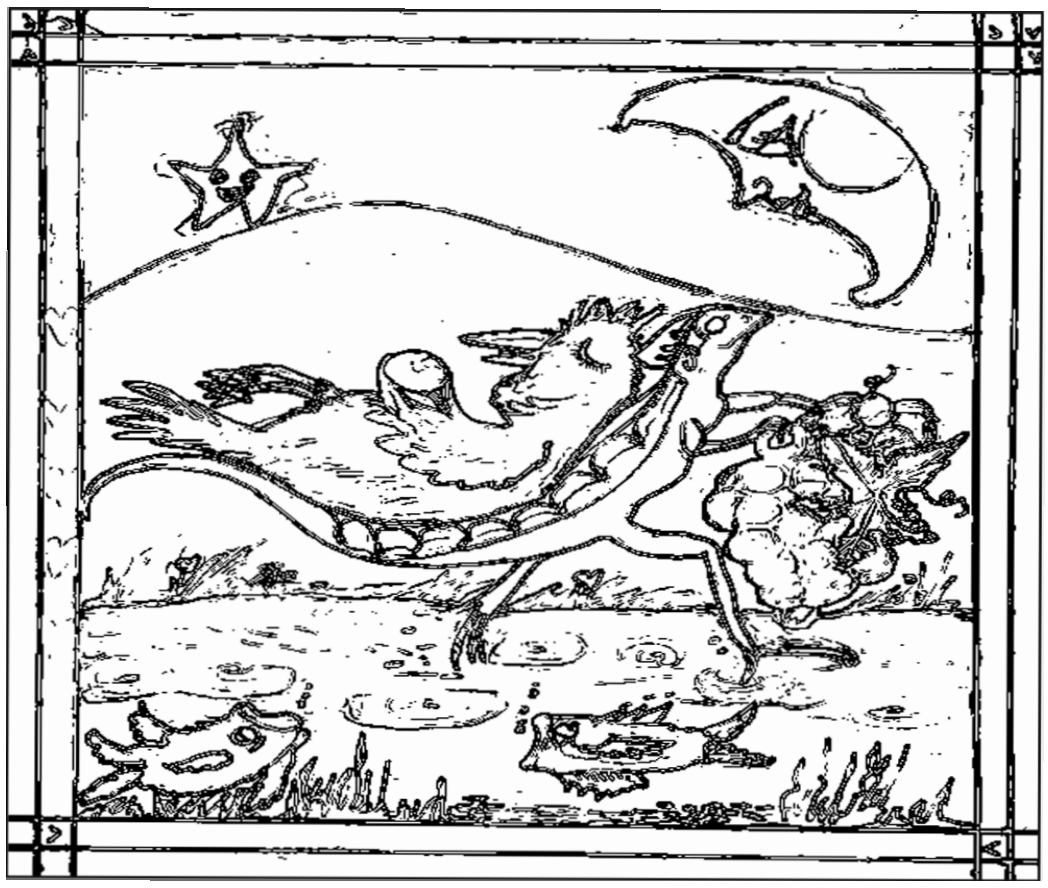
1. **Category**:_____
2. **Message**:_____
_____
_____
3. **Place in Issues**: ___Spring *by 1/23* ___Summer *by 4/9*
___Finger Lakes Family Fun *by 5/22* ___Back to School *by 7/30*
___Family Services Dir. *by 9/18* ___Winter *by 10/29*
4. **Choose:** Line Classified ad: $5/10 words (25¢ for each additional word) *and/or* Display Classified ad = $15.00 per column inch (One Column: 2 3/8" wide)
5. **Total Enclosed**: _____
6. We cannot print your ad without the following information. It will be kept strictly confidential.

Name:_____ Ph:_____
Address:_____

Enter to Win in Ithaca Child's Coloring Contest & Giveaway



Win gift certificates to:
Alphabet Soup; GreenStar Co-op; Hangar Theatre & the Hangar's Kiddstuff Series; The Cat's Pajamas; Purity Ice Cream,

Instructions:

Kids, color the picture and have your parents fill out the form below then ask them to mail it to: Ithaca Child, PO Box 242, Etna, NY 13062. You can also bring it to the Ithaca Child drop box at the Alternatives Federal Credit Union, 125 N. Fulton St. Ithaca; or print this form off of our website at: www.ithacachild.net

Deadline to enter: September 15, 2026

No purchase necessary to win. Winners will be chosen in a random drawing and may be listed in a future issue of Ithaca Child.
One entry per child please. Prize quantities are limited.
Early entries may receive prizes early for offers with a limited time for use.
A parent's email address is requested as some gifts may involve awarding paperless tickets.
No contact info will be sold and no additional solicitations will be made.

Child's Name & Age:_____ Parent's Name:_____

Mailing Address:_____Parent's email:_____

City:_____State:_____Zip:_____ Pone:_____

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Save the Date!

Ithaca Child's Annual
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will be on newsstands early October.
Advertising & Calendar
deadline is 9/18/26.
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