

TODAY'S family

May 2024

Cuyahoga

FREE!

**National
Foster
Parent
Month**

**Adventure
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Family, fun
and fresh air

**Mommy
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Breaking up is
hard to do

**Celebrate the
real meaning
of Memorial Day**

**Adrenaline
Monkey**
Feel the rush!

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Today's Family BOOK — CLUB —



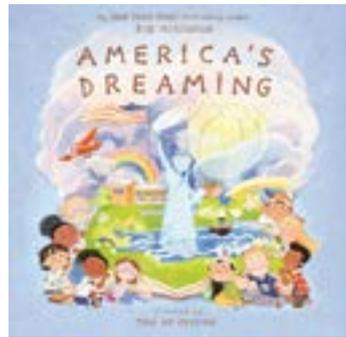
Neat Nick's Big Mess

Chad Otis—Author/Illustrator
Rocky Pond Books
On Sale: May 7, 2024
\$18.99 | Ages: 4–8

A rambunctious pet dog helps an introverted, anxious boy leave his comfort zone in this endearing and very funny picture book.

Nick has always been neat. That's what makes him comfortable. Any kind of mess or noise or other havoc makes him anxious, and often that means he chooses to be alone in his own carefully controlled bedroom. But suddenly a big, drooly, energetic dog has joined the family, and as much as he tries there's nothing Nick can do to control the doggy mess. And so, he decides he would rather avoid the pup altogether. Or would he?

This story of coping with anxiety and learning how to compromise is as big-hearted and laugh-filled as it is delightfully messy.



America's Dreaming

Bob McKinnon—Author
Thai My Phuong—Illustrator
Penguin Workshop
On Sale: June 4, 2024
\$19.99 | Ages 4–8

In AMERICA'S DREAMING, the narrator, America, is so excited to start school! They look forward to new friends and going on fun adventures. But their first day at a new school turns out to be the complete opposite. No one is friendly and it's incredibly lonely. Noticing America all alone, their new teacher brings them over to the Welcome Wagon—a cart filled with inspiring books on real-life historical figures who persevered. America reads the stories and later dreams of Amelia Earhart, Sojourner Truth, Martin Luther King Jr., and Emma Lazarus as they come alive to share their stories with little America. They return to school the next day with the confidence to make friends.

TODAY'S family

Lake, Geauga & Cuyahoga Counties

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contents

Articles

Why your triggers are a gift
Page 4

Foster Parent Month
Page 5

Adrenaline Monkey
Page 6

Adventure Zone
Page 7

**Mommy Chronicles:
Breaking up is hard to do**
Page 8

Mother's Day challenges
Page 10

How motherhood made me appreciate my mom
Page 12

The real meaning of Memorial Day
Page 13

Tips for traveling with children
Page 15

Gardening with kids
Page 18

Events & Fun

**Stan Hywet Hall
free admission for moms**
Page 14

Funny Bus returns
Page 14

Greater Cleveland Aquarium
Page 16

Eagle Zip Adventure Line at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
Page 17

Cleveland Creates Gallery at Great Lakes Science center
Page 17



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Cleveland Institute of Music offers summer day camp designed for the curious beginner

Good news, parents. Piquing your child's interest in music just got a whole lot easier.

The solution? "Music FUNdamentals," the newest and most accessible summer camp yet at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM).

Designed for the curious beginner, this new one-week day-camp cultivates a healthy love for music and lays the foundation for future study, all in a fun, nurturing, and uniquely creative environment.

"This really is a starting point for parents," said Jennifer Call, director of CIM's youth programs. "It's more of a general music experience. Kids don't already have to be proficient."

Here are the basics of "FUNdamentals."

The camp is for children in grades two through six and takes place from 9 am to 4 pm each day from Monday, July 29 to Friday, August 2 at CIM's main campus in Cleveland's University Circle.

Don't worry if your child doesn't own an instrument. Even if they had one, they wouldn't need it.

That's because this camp is for the musically inquisitive. Instead of taking private lessons,

"FUNdamentals" campers will spend the week with experienced faculty learning about instruments, singing in groups, listening to advanced players, and developing a sense of rhythm and musical literacy.

In other words, they'll benefit from the same holistic approach CIM takes with older musicians, but applied to beginners.

"The whole idea is they're going to be engaged in fun activities making and creating music," Call explained.

Music isn't the only thing they'll make, either. Between their classes, guest performances, and a surprise field trip, "FUNdamentals" campers also can expect to make a lot of friends.

If there's one thing CIM's experts have learned from years of teaching children, it's that young people learn best when they feel part of a community.

After "FUNdamentals," Call said, "Kids that aren't already our students may start to see themselves here."

For more info email preparatoryweb@cim.edu or visit cim.edu to register.



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Registration: cim.edu

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www.AdventureZoneFun.com

Why your triggers are a gift

By Rebecca Fellenbaum

You know when you are triggered. That slow creep of tension cloaks your body, grabs at your insides, and whoosh, sends that rage out sideways. Maybe you're a yeller or a stomp-out-of-the-roomer. You've heard about deep breathing, self-care, asking for help, and other beautiful strategies for preventing and managing triggers. Once the trigger state is over, you may call a friend to vent or do some online shopping to calm down.

What if, in addition to those tools to manage the moment, you also looked at your triggers as a gift? Triggers are unconscious beliefs that are served up on a silver platter for you to get to know and examine. They often run our lives without our awareness. When we experience triggers, we have an opportunity to heal them.

Triggers are a doorway into hidden beliefs we have about ourselves. When we get triggered by our kids' tantrums, our partner leaving the

dishes on the side of the sink, or our boss's email with the subject line, "Can we talk?," we get upset. We may blame or get angry at the perpetrator or ourselves. We may vent to a friend and feel validated when they agree that we don't deserve to be treated that way. But that feeling of validation is just a bandage on the deep-seated root cause of the trigger.

This is important because our triggers run our lives and we don't even know it. We see the world through our own beliefs, and many of those beliefs are unconscious. We project our unconscious beliefs onto others. What does this look like? If you have an unconscious belief that you are not important, your partner leaving their dishes next to the sink reminds you that they don't think you're important. You imagine them thinking, oh she'll put them in the dishwasher, which leaves you feeling worthless.

The belief of not being important is OURS and this trigger brings it to the surface for us to examine. If we didn't have that belief, that action



might not have triggered us.

When you feel that trigger — the left dishes, the screaming child, or whatever is triggering you — ask yourself what this trigger could reveal. Feel the emotion that comes with the trigger. It often feels like anger, but ask yourself, what is underneath this anger? Keep digging until you feel the root emotion. This may look like going from angry, to frustrated, to annoyed, to alone, to feeling undervalued to feeling unimportant. Feel the root emotion. Then ask yourself, is there truth to this? In this case, am I unimportant today? Then ask yourself, have you felt unimportant before? Sit quietly and ask yourself, what part of you feels unimportant? Ask yourself, what does this part of me want me to know?

When we communicate with the

part of us that was triggered, we bring it into consciousness and it may morph or change. One way we update these upset parts is to let it know who we are today. Speaking aloud or in our mind, we dialogue with ourselves and let these upset parts know our current age, a bit about our life, and even what day and year it is. The triggered part is often very young and needs to be re-educated. These parts are energy and energy can transform. This can happen very quickly. Doing this work can go a long way to starting to live in a healthier, more conscious way and to be less triggered by events in our lives.

Rebecca Fellenbaum is a certified life coach, blogger, and Cleveland area mom who helps parents enjoy this time in their lives. You can find her at rebeccafellenbaum.com.

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Every Child Needs Family

May is National Foster Parent Month

Cuyahoga County children need your help. There are more than 2,000 children in DCFS custody through no fault of their own. Victims of abuse and/or neglect, some may need special care or attention to help them deal with the impact of trauma in their young lives. Each of these children needs and deserves a family who will love and protect them, but there is a shortage of homes and facilities across Ohio. You can help by becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

What is foster care?

- A protective service for children and families.
- Full-time care of children, usually on a temporary basis.
- Typically results in family reunification or a permanent, adoptive home.

Who are the children needing foster care?

- Children who have experienced physical abuse, neglect or abandonment; or whose parent(s) are in jail or hospitalized.

donment; or whose parent(s) are in jail or hospitalized.

- All ages, races, and cultures.
- Some may have physical, developmental, emotional, and/or behavioral issues.
- Many have experienced extreme trauma and deprivation.

What do foster parents do?

- Provide basic daily care and supervision.
- Act in the place of the parent, making sure all needs are met.
- Take children to medical and therapy appointments.
- Apply non-physical discipline techniques that are fair and age appropriate.
- Advocate for the child and participate in Child and Family Services meetings.
- Support children in their visitation plan with their biological families or prospective adoptive families.
- Support either reunification or an alternate plan.



- Stays up-to-date on training.
- Respect the culture, race, and background of the children and their families.

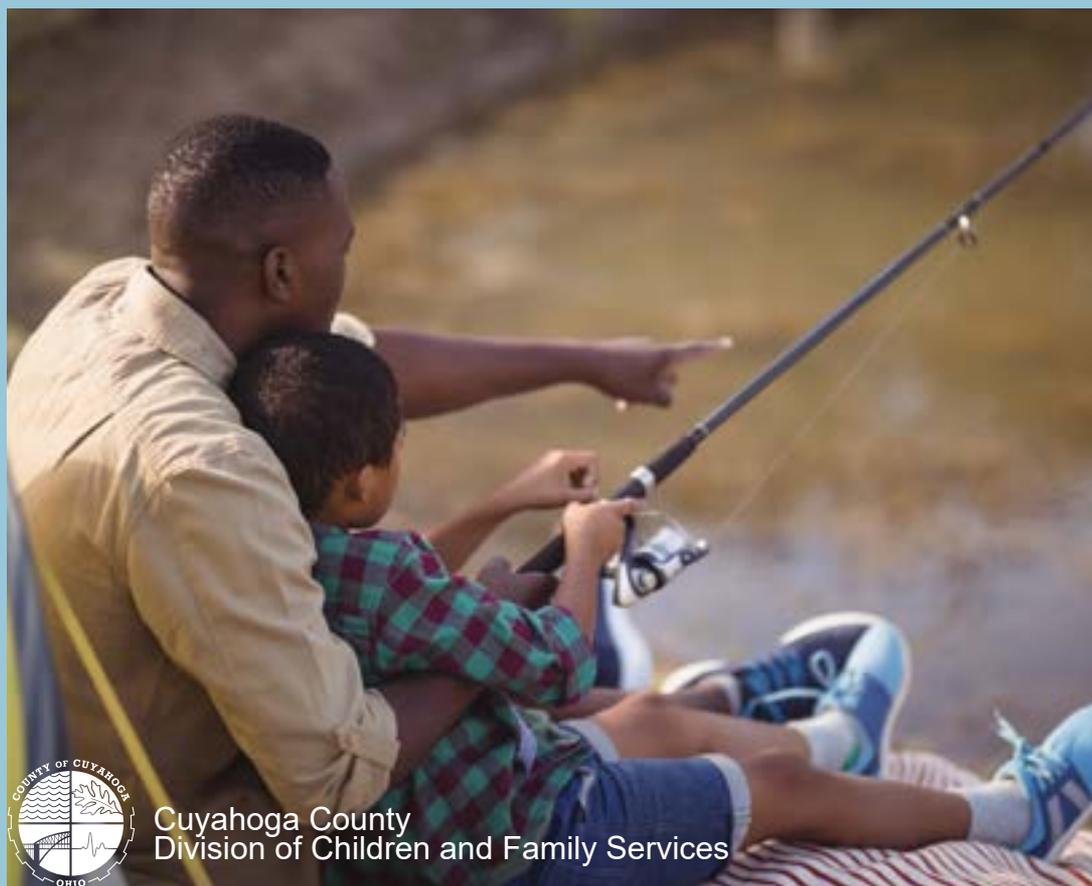
What are the requirements to become a foster parent?

- At least 21 years of age.
- Have sufficient income to meet their own basic needs.
- Be in good physical, emotional, and mental health.
- Single or part of a couple -- homosexual or heterosexual -- in a stable relationship for at least one year.
- No educational or religious requirements and home ownership is not necessary.

Is there help to foster?

- Boarding expenses, reimbursed at a daily rate.
- Monthly clothing allowance.
- A medical card for medical, dental, and therapeutic services.
- Car mileage reimbursement for necessary transportation of foster children.
- Support groups, scheduled visits, 24-hour access to the agency, and a wide range of supportive services.

To learn more about fostering or adopting contact Cuyahoga County Division of Child & Family Services at 216-881-5775 or submit an interest form on their website at www.everychildneedsfamily.com.



Cuyahoga County
Division of Children and Family Services

EVERY CHILD NEEDS FAMILY

Children who have experienced the trauma of abuse or neglect need a safe place to call home.

You can help provide stability and security by becoming a foster or adoptive parent.

Visit
everychildneedsfamily.com
or call
216-881-5775 for more
information

Feel The Rush!

Adrenaline Monkey offers adventures for every family member

If your family enjoys watching American Ninja Warrior, it's time to get them off the couch and on to an obstacle course. No thanks, you say? Your 5-year-old couldn't possibly do that and you haven't done even a single squat since before she was born?

It's time to get moving. Adrenaline Monkey, which opened June 2018 on the east side of Cleveland, is an indoor family adventure park featuring a variety of adventures at different levels. Toddlers scrambling up a mini warped wall, parents or grandparents navigating the aerial ropes course, and customers at every age in between will all feel at home here.

"It was thoughtfully designed to be approachable and exhilarating for all different ages and abilities," explains owner Denise Carkhuff.

After checking in and signing a waiver, guests are met with a soft-

play obstacle course to their right. It's meant for toddlers, but Carkhuff says older kids enjoy it, too.

Carkhuff explains, "There's an obstacle course with a soft mini warped wall. There are little walls to jump over that are made of soft materials, so young children can navigate them and not get hurt. We added some approachable overhead rings as well and a pint-sized climbing feature called the 'devil steps'."

Four ninja warrior-style obstacle courses, ranging from easy to hard, are a big draw. Depending on the level, the course may contain a spider climb, warped walls, overhead rings, salmon ladders or unstable bridges. There are also beginner and advanced parkour-inspired courses.

Most of the climbing walls are set up so participants can compete against each other, if they would like, except for one glow-in-the-dark



wall, which Carkhuff calls "fanciful." Most of the climbing walls require belays, or anchored safety ropes. Once participants are hooked in, they climb the wall as high or as quickly as they are comfortable and then are slowly lowered. However, one nonbelayed boulder climbing wall is situated above what is, essentially, a huge air mat.

"You can fall Nestea plunge style," Carkhuff says. "It's a thrill and anybody can do it."

Nondirectional aerial ropes feature 26 elements all 16 feet in the air directly above the ninja courses. There's also a basketball court.

Additionally, Adrenaline Monkey offers an arcade for the gamers in the family.

"If there's a big party, not everybody does everything, so it's good to have options," Carkhuff says. "We hope to convince some of the gamers to get more active."

A bar with a recharging station allows parents to work on their computers and supervise children, who may be taking a class or attending a party. A 4,200 square-foot mezzanine is home to an event space and the Monkey Bar, which offers food and beverages ranging from avocado toast to cocktails. It's an ideal spot for hosting birthday parties, bar and bat mitzvahs, bachelor parties, corporate team building events, and other occasions.

Ninja warrior training classes, after-school programs, school and sports team field trips, and summer and school vacation camps are also

part of the mix.

Carkhuff, a mergers and acquisitions attorney at Jones Day, opened Adrenaline Monkey at the urging of her twin daughters when they were 7 years old. It took about a year for Carkhuff to warm up to the idea and another couple of years to find the property. The building had to be newly constructed because Carkhuff couldn't find an existing structure with tall enough walls to accommodate all of the adventures.

"I have an entrepreneurial spirit hidden in this lawyer body of mine and I decided to go for it," she says. "I thought, what a great way to show my daughters they could do anything they want and it's okay to take risks."

For general info, visit them online at www.adralinemonkeyfun.com or call 216-282-3100. Adrenaline Monkey is located at 26800 Renaissance Parkway, north of I-480.



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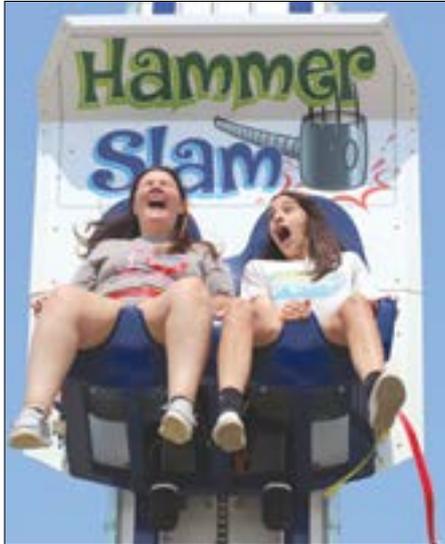
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Enjoy family fun and fresh air at Adventure Zone



With the warmer weather, parents are looking for outdoor activities they can participate in with their kids. Adventure Zone Family Fun Center in Geneva-on-the-Lake makes being active outdoors affordable and safe for families around the area.

“This is a positive family experience,” says Donniella Winchell, co-owner. “It’s an affordable atmosphere where families will feel comfortable and safe.”

A short drive for all of Lake, Geauga, Ashtabula, and Eastern Cuyahoga counties, Adventure Zone lives up to its promise of being a positive family experience. On site, you’ll find a giant arcade, merry-go-round, Adventure Krawl, a kid’s play area, go-karts, miniature golf, batting cages, bungee trampoline, climbing and repelling walls, snack shop and zip line, two escape rooms and the Hammer Slammer tower ride.

The facility also features golf cart rentals and a pavilion that can seat up to 150 for family reunions and company outings or can be divided in smaller sections to accommodate

birthday groups.

“We have a great property with a view of the lake and we wanted to use it,” says Winchell. “The state park’s bike path goes along the shoreline and in the evening, you can see a beautiful sunset”

In addition to these activities, Adventure Zone hosts birthday parties and group outings.

Winchell, her husband Larry, and their partner Don Woodward have owned the business for 27 years and it’s a family affair.

“Our daughter and son-in-law are integrally involved and our grandkids work here during the summer months,” says Winchell. “We also hire about 90 seasonal employees each year. This business is owned by a family that cares about families.”

Adventure Zone opens for the 2024 season weekends on Friday, May 3 and begins seven days a week Memorial Day weekend. For hours and pricing, visit www.adventurezonefun.com, call 440-466-3555 or text 216-469-5903. They are located a 5600 Lake Road E in Geneva-on-the-Lake.

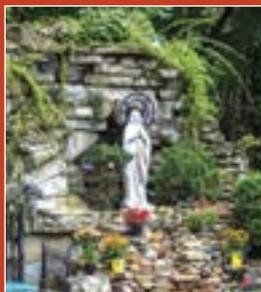
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Breaking up is hard to do

By Stacy Turner

Professor and author Brene Brown notes that boundaries are a prerequisite for compassion and empathy. She explains, “We can’t connect with someone unless we’re clear about where we end, and they begin.” Compassion and empathy were put to the test recently when our daughter officially broke up with her boyfriend. Over the time they spent together, she came to realize that when she stopped making him a priority, they simply didn’t see each other. When she brought it up to him, he explained it away with a litany of excuses. But she’d finally had enough when he wasn’t available to celebrate her birthday — not with her family and not with her friends.

When she finally worked up the nerve to break it off, she decided to tell him face-to-face despite the discomfort. She thought he deserved as much, that it was the right thing to do. He was completely blindsided, so she gave him time to vent. Once their conversation was over, she returned home sad but relieved.

Then the texts began, as he tried to convince her to change her mind via a stream of flowery words meant to appease her. In later texts, he discounted her thoughts and feelings and admitted little responsibility in what had transpired. He tried to cajole her, challenging her to “not be



emotional” about the decision. His text campaign showed utter lack of regard for her thoughts and feelings, and my husband and I were angry that he would treat her this way.

It was at that point, we began questioning our parenting choices and wondered if we were wrong to teach her to treat others the way she’d want to be treated. Did we miss sharing the lesson that the people who don’t respond in kind don’t

deserve your compassion? Had we equipped our kindhearted daughter with strength to stand up to people who may mistake her compassion as weakness?

It was difficult, sitting idle as she learned to figure out what she needs, what she’ll accept, and how far her compassion extends. These are boundaries we can’t set for her, no matter how much we’d like. To her credit, she didn’t respond in anger. She replied to the long-winded texts in the same, brief manner — that her choice was the right choice — for nearly three weeks, which turned out to be the statute of limitations on her compassion toward him.

It’s true that breaking up is hard to do, whether you’re the breaker or the breakee. Having experienced a few breakups back in the day, both my husband and I had anticipated the negative turn the conversations had taken, although we hoped we were wrong. After all, being hurt tends to bring out the worst in us. With previous experience on both sides of that equation, neither of us would have had the patience or compassion to be as gracious as our daughter proved to be. And who knows, after this experience she may choose to be a little less compassionate in future splits. Nevertheless, these lessons are necessary for both parties, as each learns to set healthy boundaries and navigate toward future relationships.

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Mother's Day challenges

By Kerrie McLoughlin

Remember Mother's Day when you were a kid? The day probably revolved around your own mom, stepmom, grandmother, aunt or other maternal figure. Then maybe your mother-in-law came into the picture, and you were posed with the challenge of figuring out how to split your time every second Sunday in May.

Once YOU became a mother, you probably realized that juggling Mother's Day visits should be an Olympic event—or at least a reality TV show. While it's true you can't make everyone happy all of the time, you CAN honor all the moms in your life — including yourself — every year. Here are some ideas!

Challenge: So many moms, so little time.

Solution: Change it up. Who says Mother's Day should only be celebrated on that specific Sunday in May? Have your stepmom over for dinner one night during the week leading up to Mother's Day. Then

maybe take your mother-in-law out to dinner the night before. When Sunday rolls around, have your own mom over to hang out with, showing her with cards, flowers and little gifts. Serve up a special (easy or takeout) meal. You can get the best of both worlds on Mother's Day — being with your own mom and being with the little ones who made YOU a mom.

Challenge: A long-distance maternal relationship.

Solution: Technology in the form of FaceTime, Zoom or Skype. You could also make different plans every now and then (e.g., have an out-of-town Mother's Day one year, then the next year stay put; or have one of the moms come for a special weekend sleepover at your place).

Challenge: You feel selfish and guilty for wanting it to be about you.

Solution: Permission granted — you're entitled to your own choice about spending your day or weekend once you become a mom yourself. You might want to get away for



a Saturday spa day or sit around at a coffeehouse on Sunday leisurely reading alone or maybe chat with a friend for a few hours. Other years you might want to hang out around the house all day letting the kids pamper you.

Challenge: Your household inboxes (laundry hamper, kitchen sink, calendar, etc.) are always full.

Solution: Of all days, take TODAY off, which means no housework! Close your eyes as you walk by the sink full of dishes, hold your nose

as you stroll by the laundry hamper. In anticipation of this holiday, make sure you have paper plates and cups on hand for when your family serves you like the queen you are.

Challenge: Your child is a baby, and your husband can't cook.

Solution: If your husband and kids aren't quite able to make you dinner on Mother's Day, let them take you to a restaurant. If wrestling with the kids at a restaurant isn't your style, hit up DoorDash. Make sure you have something indulgent on hand,

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Celebrating Moms

like little cheesecake bites or a lovely double-chocolate cake because this is the day you get to spoil yourself or be spoiled and not feel one bit guilty!

Challenge: You're a single mom.

Solution: If you're parenting solo, hopefully your kids will take over or a trusted adult will assist them in making your day special. If your ex has the kids for the weekend, focus on yourself. The "no housework" rule applies to you, too, sister ... do what you love to do all day long. A few ideas are: Head outside or to an indoor track for a walk, read a juicy

novel, see a movie, soak in the tub with a bath bomb, or hang out with your own mom.

Mother's Day is, of course, about mothers! Whatever situation you're in mom-wise, try to make today out-of-the-ordinary in some way. Just as you work hard to make sure your children enjoy their own birthdays and other holidays to the fullest, please consider that you also deserve to be adored and cherished. It's all about balance, and it CAN be done!

Kerrie McLoughlin is the home-schooling mom of five and author of The Tater Tot Casserole Cookbook.



Just For Laughs



"At least when it comes to Mother of the Year – you're a shoe-in."

Sunday school teacher: Tell me, Johnny. Do you say prayers before eating?

Johnny: No, ma'am, I don't have to. My mom's a good cook.

A mother is trying to get her son to eat carrots. "Carrots are good for your eyes," she says.

"How do you know?" the boy asks.

The mother replies, "Have you ever seen a rabbit wearing glasses?"

Pee Wee: What did the digital clock say to its mother?

Westy: What?

Pee Wee: "Look, Ma! No hands!"

Elephant: Why do mother kangaroos hate rainy days?

Hippo: I give up.

Elephant: Because their kids have to play inside!



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How motherhood made me appreciate my mom

By Sarah Lyons

When I look back at each important moment in my life: the day I learned to drive, my graduation, my wedding, the birth of my first child, she is always standing in the background smiling and cheering me on. More importantly, she was part of the other not-so-monumental moments in my life like when I got stung by a bee, when the kids teased me, and when I cried my way through my first broken heart. My mom was always there to support me through all the moments, big and small. Now that I have been a mom for a dozen years, I appreciate my mom so much more for the things she has always done with little or no recognition. I now realize the sacrifices she made and the monumental effort she put in. Here are just a few reasons why I appreciate my mom a whole lot more since becoming a mom myself.

For maintaining

A mother's work is never done and it is a thankless job. Taking

even one day off means more work for days to come. Moms pick up the same toys, wash the same dishes, and do the same laundry over and over again. Not only do moms maintain the housework, but they also hold a mental inventory of all items in the home. Most moms can recall the location of the baby's favorite stuffed animal, the toddler's missing shoe, the library books, the stapler, and any other random item a family member may request at any given time. I appreciate the example of steadfastness that my mom gave me for maintaining our home.

For managing

As moms, we often feel like we live in our minivans. Moms don't just transport kids from one activity to the next. They also maintain the family calendar, make appointments, and make sure everyone is in the right place at the right time with the right gear (musical instrument, snacks, sports gear, sunscreen, backpack, and the list goes on). Juggling school and activities in itself is a full



time job that my mom (and most moms) manage with ease. I appreciate my mom for being the social planner, taxi driver, and personal assistant to our whole family as we grew up.

love for their family. I appreciate my mom for all the things she has done that I never thought to thank her for.

For loving me anyway

Moms love their kids through tantrums, potty training, back talk, and rebellion. There is no doubt that raising kids is trying on patience but moms have a way of letting us know that no matter what mistakes we make, they will be there to catch us when we fall. I appreciate my mom for loving me even when I was unlovable.

For letting me go

When you become a mother, you are the center of your child's world. You feed them, change them, and comfort them. The more they grow, the more independent they become. While this is something to celebrate, it can be heart wrenching to loosen the grip on a child and trust them to manage life and all of its challenges alone. It's scary and new and feels more like a loss of control than anything else, but as you watch your child take on life's challenges it can be a great sense of pride as well. I appreciate my mom for letting me go, grow, and experience life in my own way.

This Mother's Day, take notice of the hard work moms do every day. Acknowledge the little things they do, thank them for always being there, and hug them tight before you leave.

For enduring

The first time I dropped my son off at a babysitter's and watched him cry and reach for me in the window my heart broke. As moms, we endure heartache often as we watch our children learn and grow, succeed and fail, and endure illnesses, hurt feelings, and disappointment. Our heart soars when they meet their goals and sinks when things don't work out. Motherhood is a roller coaster of emotions that us moms withstand without complaint. I appreciate my mom for her strong support of me even when she was hurting too.

For the unseen

There are things moms do every day that go unnoticed. Moms make sure the football jersey is clean before the next game, check in on a sick child during the night, drop off a forgotten lunchbox, put puzzle pieces back where they belong, replace toothbrushes, clean out the pantry, email teachers with concerns, volunteer, cook, shop, and so many little things that keep a family going every day. The little things that don't seem to matter, that most won't notice, that no one asks for, that moms do just because they want to show their

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Celebrate the real meaning of Memorial Day with your children

By Rebecca Hastings

While we all enjoy a day off and throw some burgers on the grill, teaching kids about Memorial Day is an important way to honor our country and all who served. But it can feel hard to know what to say, how to make it memorable, and ways to make a difference. These simple tips will help!

What is Memorial Day?

The last Monday of May is set aside for one simple thing: remembering those who have died during active military service. Technically, it is set aside to honor only those who have died. However, it is often observed as a celebration of the USA with American flags, parades, and cookouts.

But what about Veterans Day?

Many people get confused between Memorial Day and Veterans Day because they both celebrate people who have served our country. While Memorial Day is specific to those who died while serving, Veteran's Day is a chance to honor all those who have served in the US military. These people can still be living, and it is always November 11, the anniversary of the end of World War I.

What can we do?

There are many ways we can celebrate and honor those who lost their lives during active military service. Even the freedom to have a cookout and be with family in freedom is a way to honor their sacrifice.

Read a book: There are many children's books that show the value of the men and women who serve our

country and highlight patriotism. To go a little deeper about Memorial Day, "The Wall" by Eve Bunting which tells the story of a child visiting the Vietnam War Memorial is a great choice for preschool ages up.

Plant a flag: Memorial Day is the perfect time to leave flags on the graves of local military men and women. Small flags can be purchased online or locally. Just be sure to check with the cemetery for guidelines.

Sing along: Learn a song that celebrates America. Great options for kids include The Star-Spangled Banner and You're a Grand Old Flag. You can find age-appropriate sing-alongs online to enjoy.

Say thank you: Memorial Day can be hard for those who have lost someone in military service. Teach kids to recognize that these people have sacrificed something for the freedom we all have. A simple thank you, a card or a kind gesture goes a long way.

Make a flag: There are endless ways you can teach kids about the American Flag. Be creative! Try making a flag-themed dessert or coloring a big flag in your driveway with sidewalk chalk. Whatever you decide to do, just make sure you have plenty of red, white, and blue!

Watch a Memorial Day parade: Full of fun, music, and festivity, a Memorial Day parade is a great way to celebrate while still remembering the meaning of the holiday. Teach kids the importance of standing when the flag or military service members walk by. These simple things go a long way in showing honor.

See *MEMORIAL DAY* page 14



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Moms receive complimentary admission to Stan Hywet on Mother's Day, May 12

Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens offers all mothers a complimentary self-guided tour of the manor house and grounds on Mother's Day, May 12. The estate is open from 10 am–6 pm; last entry at 4 pm. Accompanying guests pay regular admission prices — \$19 adults, \$9 youth (3–17), children 2 & under, free — which includes a self-guided tour of the historic gardens, the Gate Lodge, Playgarden, and the 65-room Manor House featuring “Blueprints

To Bricks,” a new permanent exhibit about the construction of the Manor House, from design to magnificent home.

Molly's Shop is filled with jewelry, Stan Hywet logo wear and other gifts for mothers, and Molly's Courtyard Café features salads, sandwiches, beverages and sweet treats.

All tours are self-guided on Mother's Day. Ticket information may be found at stanhywet.org.



Funny Bus Cleveland adds second bus— Now open for the season

Cleveland's favorite rolling comedy show has expanded their fleet to meet the demand of its growing customer base.

Recently voted “Most Original Comedy Concept” in Cleveland, the Funny Bus offers a 90-minute tour of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. More than a standard sight-seeing tour, the most unique aspect of the Funny Bus is the hosts who are local comedians dedicated to entertaining guests.

The comedians mix humor, music, games and dancing to provide a high-energy interactive experience. Guests may also bring their own beer and wine in sealed containers.

Opened in 2021, the touring company has been operating with one 34-passenger bus, but growing popularity for the bright red, open-air Funny Bus has outpaced availability.

“It was disappointing when we had to turn away guest and visitors to Cleveland who had heard great things and were eager to try the Fun-

ny Bus,” said owner Dean Schnurr. “The second bus will allow us to add more tours and accommodate larger private groups too,” he added.

The new addition to the fleet is identical to the original bus in most aspects, but it is a bit larger with a 38-passenger capacity. It is a Bluebird converted school bus and was delivered to Cleveland in early April.

The new bus will hit the road for tours starting in May — the Funny Bus has already begun operating for the season using the first bus.

This year the Funny Bus will be expanding weekend tours and is now offering tours on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Private tours are available any day of the week and can now accommodate groups of up to 72 people with the buses.

Tickets on the public tours remain only \$29, which includes taxes and fees. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the website at www.funnybus.net/cleveland or contact by phone at 216-404-7786.

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Memorial Day from page 13

Adopt a military family: The reality of Memorial Day is always on the minds of those with someone in the military. Consider choosing a military family to show extra kindness to by sending them cards, making a meal, or inviting them to join you for holidays. These little acts of kindness go a long way.

Enjoy time with your family and friends: When you think about Memorial Day consider the cost paid by the men and women who lost their lives serving our country. Think about the cost to their families, friends, and communities when they lost the person they cared about. Each one of those who died serving

our country did so for freedom. We reap the benefits of their sacrifice.

That makes it even more important to celebrate. Spend time with the people you love. Enjoy a beautiful late spring day. Play and rest and live knowing that this too honors those who died. It is for this kind of life that they served our country.

If you lost someone

Memorial Day takes on a different feeling for those who have lost someone in service to the United States. If someone you love died serving our country, know that their sacrifice, as well as your own, is seen and honored. May we always remember.

Eat, pray and bring a change of clothes

By Cheryl Maguire

I love to travel. Before becoming a proud parent of three darling cherubs everyone said to me, “Enjoy traveling now because once you have kids you won’t be able to do it anymore.” Well, I proved all the naysayers wrong by hopping on that plane with three kids in tow, sometimes internationally. I didn’t let their age stop me either, they all flew before the age of two.

It wasn’t always easy though. In fact, it was downright disgusting at times but definitely worth it. I’m going to share some tips with you to save you the headache and messes I suffered. Plus, I threw in a tip that will shower you with compliments — that’s not always easy to find — especially being a parent on an airplane. So buckle up buttercup, you are about to hear extraordinary (and possibly humorous) international travel tricks with kids.

Bring a car seat

The first time our twins flew internationally they were 18 months old. Most airlines do not require you to purchase a ticket if a child is under the age of two so this seemed like a no-brainer to me — of course, I saved the money and didn’t purchase tickets for them. I wish I video recorded this plane trip because I know I would’ve won first place in “American’s Funniest Videos.”

The entire ride both ways was a wrestling match between us (me and my husband) and our boy/girl twins — they definitely won in case you were wondering. There was no way they wanted to sit quietly on our laps for five hours — they wanted to roam freely through the exciting new airplane. As you can imagine, I still have nightmares about it.

When we traveled with their younger sister, I purchased a ticket for her which meant I could strap her into her car seat. Do you think there was a wrestling match then? Nope, she slept the entire flight both ways. It was worth every penny spent on the ticket to save my sanity.

Pack a change of clothes for the plane

Sometimes you learn the “hard way” and other times you learn in a downright repulsive way — don’t

worry you are going to hear all the gory details. When my son flew for the first time, we didn’t know he is prone to motion sickness (we now also pack Dramamine).

I bet you are wondering, “How did you figure it out?” I’ll tell you how. We were cruising at an altitude of 36,000 feet since I remember the friendly captain making an announcement when my son vomited his egg and cheese sandwich all over the person to his left. And who might that have been? You guessed it, me. Of course, I had nothing to change into for the rest of the five-hour flight.

Your child doesn’t have to get motion sickness—there could be a variety of other issues (I’m sure you can envision it if you try) which could require a change of clothes so be sure to pack at least something to change into or you will wish you did (and wondering if an egg and cheese sandwich was a wise breakfast choice).

Pack a change of clothes for your destination

Along with packing a change of clothes for the plane, you should also add clothes for your destination (such as a bathing suit, summer clothes, etc.) to your carry-on bag. Your luggage could get lost or it could take time to get to your room so if you have other clothes accessible you will be ready to go swimming or whatever fun adventure you planned during your trip. You don’t want to be the family dressed in a hoodie and pants by the pool because you couldn’t change your clothes. Besides dripping with sweat, you will have three whining kids repeatedly asking, “When can I go swimming?” Trust me that is no way to start your vacation.

Bring a pen (or two)

It took me at least three international flights before I remembered to add two pens to my passport holder. On the plane you receive immigration and customs forms which you need to fill out for each child (if they are too young to do it themselves) and the airlines will not provide a pen for you. Sure you could wait until you get there, but if your child is strapped into their car seat (which I know you brought because you



used my tip) then you will have time to fill it out.

Bring LOTS of food

I can’t stress this enough. I pack an entire carry-on suitcase of just snacks. Have you ever gone to the zoo or a farm and fed the animals? It’s fun, right? The animals are happy to receive some food and you feel happy that you made the animal happy—it’s a win-win situation. Well, traveling on a plane for hours in a small confined area requires

some moments when you want to “feel happy” so food is a great way to achieve this effect even if it only lasts for five minutes. You have to save up these moments for when your child is about to lose it because even if you bring a whole carry-on suitcase filled with food, it’s going to run out if you overuse it. And you don’t want to have to use your change of clothes from them vomiting on you because you overfed them.

See TRAVEL on page 16

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Add a splash of wonder to Mother's Day and Father's Day weekends at Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Extended hours, \$5 parent discounts and caregiver-themed activities

"Seas" an opportunity to show your appreciation for loved ones while sharing an appreciation for the natural world at Greater Cleveland Aquarium. Parenting-themed trivia, extended hours and discounts for moms/stepmoms/foster moms/grandmas on Mother's Day weekend (Saturday and Sunday, May 11 and 12, 2024, 9 am–6pm) and dads/stepdads/foster dads/grandpas on Father's Day weekend (Saturday and Sunday, June 15 and 16, 2024, 9 am–6 pm) let you "shell-abrate" special caregivers. Visiting moms and dads also receive a "fin"tastic parent pin they can sport on their respective weekends while supplies last.

"Whether you're counting the suckers on an octopus arm, admiring the shimmer of schooling silver dollars, looking up into the toothy grin of a sandtiger, being splashed by a stingray or tracing the contours

of a tiger cowrie shell, an Aquarium visit is a memorable experience generations can share," says GM Stephanie White.

While family is something humans cherish, White notes that parenting looks quite a bit different for many animals. "A great deal of effort can go into finding a mate, building a nest or keeping predators at bay, but that's where nurturing ends for the majority of fish, reptiles and amphibians," explains White. For example, newborn green tree pythons, sharks and weedy seadragons are left to fend for themselves. Some cichlids, gobies and guppies will snack on their own progeny as a source of nutrition. And cuckoo catfish dodge parental responsibilities altogether by tricking other species into caring for their eggs.

Mother's Day and Father's Day weekend activities are included with general admission (\$0–\$19.95 per



person). Visiting moms save \$5 at the ticket counter for in-person adult admission with the purchase of another adult or child ticket on May 11 & 12, while dads are eligible for the same parental discount June 15 and 16.*

Greater Cleveland Aquarium is also offering everyone the opportunity to swap the more traditional slippers, mugs, ties, candles and wallets for the gift of a year's worth of undersea adventures with a 10% discount on any level Greater Cleveland Aquarium annual pass on May 11 and 12 (with code 10MOM2024) or June 15 and 16 (with code 10DAD2024). In addition to unlimited daily return admission for the

family, membership perks include free parking while visiting, exclusive programming, discounted and free events, birthday party and gift shop savings and more.

Families are also invited to follow @CLEAaquarium on social media (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram) in the days leading up to the holiday weekends. "We'll share facts about animal parenting and cards kids can make at home using everyday items," says White.

Located in the Flats West Bank, 2000 Sycamore Street, Cleveland, OH 44113. Call 216-862-8803 or visit greaterclevelandaquarium.com.

*Cannot be combined with other offers.

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Travel from page 15

Play old school games

Let's face it, things can go wrong with electronics (battery die, no WiFi, or glitching---whatever that means but it must mean something bad since my son screams the word in frustration when using electronics a lot) and kids can get bored with it. If you are relying on that cool TV in the seat, don't because I've been on at least three flights where none of the TVs worked.

There are lots of old-school games like a deck of cards, tic-tac-toe, or iSpy that are easy to play in a confined space yet don't take up much space in your carry-on bag. Kids of all ages usually love these games. You could even learn a card trick or two and wow your little ones with your sleight of hand.

Put the name on the outside of the passport

A fellow traveler told me this tip and I've received numerous compliments about it from security and airline personnel. In fact, I've probably heard more compliments about my passport cover than any other parenting technique I've tried.

So, if for no other reason, you could put the label on just to hear, "what a great idea." It will make you feel like a good parent while standing in the three-hour security line.

The main reason for putting your name on the front cover is when you are in charge of five passports (at least I am) it prevents you from having to open each one to figure out who it belongs to. And of course, before I labeled it, I always ended up opening all five passports to get to the correct one. It makes things a little easier which is something you need when traveling with kids. And it only took less than five minutes to put a label with the name on the cover, no crafting ability necessary, I promise.

Who's ready to hop on a plane?

Me, me!! Now that I shared my mishaps and admirations with you, hopefully you can have a fun flight with your wee ones. Yes I did use the word fun and flying together—you have to make the best of it because once you get to your destination it will all be a distant memory unless you forgot your change of clothes.

Eagle Zip Adventure ride at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

Have you ever wondered what it feels like to fly like an eagle? Ride the Eagle Zip Adventure Ride and find out. On this tandem zip ride, guests board on the ride platform. Once seated and strapped in they are pulled backwards over Waterfowl Lake and up to a tower that rises 150 feet above the Zoo where riders can see all the way to downtown Cleveland. After pausing at the top for a moment, riders are released for a thrilling 35 mile per hour zip ride back down to the starting platform.



What are the requirements to ride?

- Minimum rider height is 42”.
- Riders between 42” – 47” tall must ride with a paying adult.
- Riders 48” or taller may ride alone.
- Maximum weight is 300 lbs. for a single rider and 450 lbs. for two riders. Riders will be weighed prior to boarding.
- Riders must not have an impairment which prevents a normal seating position or use of the safety restraints.

What are the hours of the ride?

- 10:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. daily and during special events
- April 1 – December 31 (weather permitting)
- Ride cannot operate during thunder and lightning storms, rainstorms, snowstorms, and winds exceeding 33 mph.

How much does it cost to ride?

- \$8.00 for Cleveland Zoological Society members.
 - \$9.00 for the general public.
- Visit www.clevelandmetroparks.com/zoo for more info.

Cleveland Creates Gallery at Great Lakes Science Center

The Cleveland Creates Gallery is a newer permanent exhibit inspired by the innovative spirit of the city that lies just outside the museum’s doors. The new gallery underscores northeast Ohio’s story of manufacturing technology and represents a \$2.25 million investment in changing the Science Center’s visitor experience.



Inside the gallery, guests will engage with interactive exhibits that dive into the realms of technology, sensors, data and remote robotics, and will give them an opportunity to explore the tools and skills that are driving advances in Northeast Ohio.

“The interactive exhibits within this new entrance gallery are an outgrowth of the Science Center’s programs,” said Kirsten Ellenbogen, Science Center president & CEO. “Many of our programs for schools have explored these topics and led us to this moment, including our Robotics Initiative for youth, our annual Manufacturing Day event, and workshops that introduce the Internet of Things, blockchain and more.”

Stationed throughout the gallery are real-life representations of STEM professionals from across the community, covering industries such as aeronautics, automation, remote robotics, steel and chemistry. These authentic and representational members of the community are embedded into the exhibits that will inspire guests to see themselves confidently in the STEM-rich workforce of tomorrow. The gallery was developed, designed and fabricated with a multi-lingual approach including dual language interactives, videos and labels for broader inclusion.

The Cleveland Creates Gallery is included with general admission to the Science Center.

For more information, visit www.GreatScience.com.

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Gardening with kids

Playing in dirt isn't just loads of fun – it's healthy, too!

By Kimberly Blaker

There's no question, playing in the dirt tops the list of fun for young children despite the protests of many well-intended parents. If you're one of those parents, you can put your fears aside.

It turns out dirt is actually beneficial to the long-term health of kids, according to a Northwestern University article, "Germs at four, less inflammation at forty," by Clare Milliken. Studies have found that early exposure to certain germs, like those found in dirt, actually help kids' immune systems learn to better regulate inflammation. In turn, this exposure reduces kids' risk for a number of diseases throughout their lives.

For that reason, a family garden is a perfect opportunity to build your kids' immune systems. Better still, gardening offers lots of other benefits to kids and families. Through gardening, kids learn to be respon-

sible by caring for their own plants. It's also a great way to help kids learn about and develop an appreciation for science. Another health benefit is that gardening encourages healthier eating. Not to mention, it's a great activity for family bonding.

So gather up your kids and gardening supplies, head outdoors, and get ready for some dirt-filled fun.

Getting started

First, decide where to plant your garden. Then allot a small space for your child to have his or her own garden, too. This will help build your child's enthusiasm for the garden and encourage your child to take ownership and responsibility for it. Having their own garden is especially exciting and rewarding for kids because they know that they, alone (or with minimal help), grew those little seeds into a marvelous plant.

Next, decide what to plant. For young children, consider fast-growing plants your kids are familiar



with. Little kids also love plants that are colorful or have strong scents.

If your kids are older, let them choose what they want to grow. Keep in mind your child's personality, though. If your child tends to be impatient, suggest plants that are easy to care for and grow quickly.

As you proceed in planning and preparation, include your child in it as much as possible. Remember, this stage is as much fun for kids as

it is for parents and helps build kids' enthusiasm. Also, let your kids help you draw up the garden plan. If your kids are old enough, they can also create their own shopping list.

When you go shopping for the supplies, take your kids along, and let them pick out their own seeds and gardening tools. For the safety of young children, look for kids' gardening tools made of durable plastic. *Continued*➔

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Planting your garden

When you begin planting, show your child how to plant the seeds and how to properly space them apart. Then have your child water the seeds as directed.

To help your child take responsibility for his or her own garden, put a daily gardening task list on the refrigerator.

Also, to help your child maintain enthusiasm, suggest your child

keep a garden log. Your child can record the date of plantings, each day's gardening activities, when each plant sprouts, the amount of growth of the plants, and the harvesting of the plants.

Finally, after harvesting, have your child help you prepare the vegetables. Offer your child different ways to prepare or cook them to help your child develop a lifelong love for fresh, healthy veggies.

Books on gardening with kids

To get your family gardening project off on the right foot, consider an age-appropriate book on gardening. This will also help build your child's enthusiasm. Included below are a couple of books for parents too, to help make your family garden a success.

The Little Gardener by Jan Gerardi (ages 3-4)

The Little Gardener by Emily Hughes (ages 3-7)

Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt by Kate Messner (ages 5-8)

Roots, Shoots, Buckets & Boots: Gardening Together with Children by Sharon Lovejoy (ages 4-10)

Gardening Lab for Kids: 52 Fun Experiments to Learn, Grow, Harvest, Make, Play, and Enjoy Your Garden by Renata Brown (ages 8-12)

The Book of Gardening Projects for Kids: 101 Ways to Get Kids Outside, Dirty, and Having Fun by Whitney Cohen (for parents)

Lamps Plus has something beautiful for every room in your home!

Franklin Iron Works Light Tree 72½" 4-Light Torchiere Floor Lamp

Add ample lighting and character to your living space with this bronze four-light torchiere floor lamp from the Franklin Iron Works brand. The unique arts and crafts-inspired floor lamp boasts four tiers of lighting adorned in square-sided white glass. With a convenient on-off foot switch, this floor lamp brings the right touch of light and decor to a seating area or room.



Possini Euro Ventano 38" High Black Metal Plug-In Wall Lamp

From the Possini Euro Design collection, this transitional metal wall lamp allows you to enjoy full lighting without using valuable table or floor space, by simply attaching to the wall and plugging into an outlet.

Crafted from metal and finished in matte black, this piece is topped off with a linen box shade.



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the heart of Little Italy*



CLEVELANDMONTESSORI.ORG

PreK-Grade 8



Students utilize the culturally-rich University Circle area to enhance their classroom experience.

216.421.0700

GYMNASTICS FOR KIDS!

Now in Our 21st Year of Helping
Gymnasts Reach their Goals!



Summer Camp 2024

DAILY OR WEEKLY ENROLLMENT AVAILABLE!
ENROLLMENT IS ALWAYS ONGOING UNTIL CAMPS FILL!



- For ages 4–14, boys and girls, and all levels of gymnastics experience, from recreational to competitive gymnastics.
- We coach all levels of new, experienced, and competitive gymnastics.
- Our philosophy at JSG is that gymnastics is for everyone, an excellent basis for physical fitness, and benefits coordination for every sport and children's health.

SUMMER TWISTERS CAMP

Ages 4–7 yrs

June 4–27, 2024

Tue. / Wed. / Thu.

9:15 am–noon

\$120 per week

or \$40 per day

FLIPS FOR KIDS GYMNASTICS CAMP

Ages entering K–14 yrs

June 10–August 16, 2024

9:15 am–3pm

\$300 Mon.–Fri. or

\$240 Mon.–Thu. or

\$60 per day



Open Gym: Follows each camp day from 3:30–5:00 pm and \$10 per participant.

Daily After-care: 3–5pm, \$10 per day and preregistration is required.

There are no refunds for canceled, absent, or unattended camp days or weeks, after-care, or open gym.

**Jump Start
Gymnastics** 

23700 Mercantile Road, Beachwood
Rear of National Biological Building

(216) 896-0295

Website: jsgymnastics.com

Email: jsgymnastics@jsgymnastics.com