

North Shore Children & Families

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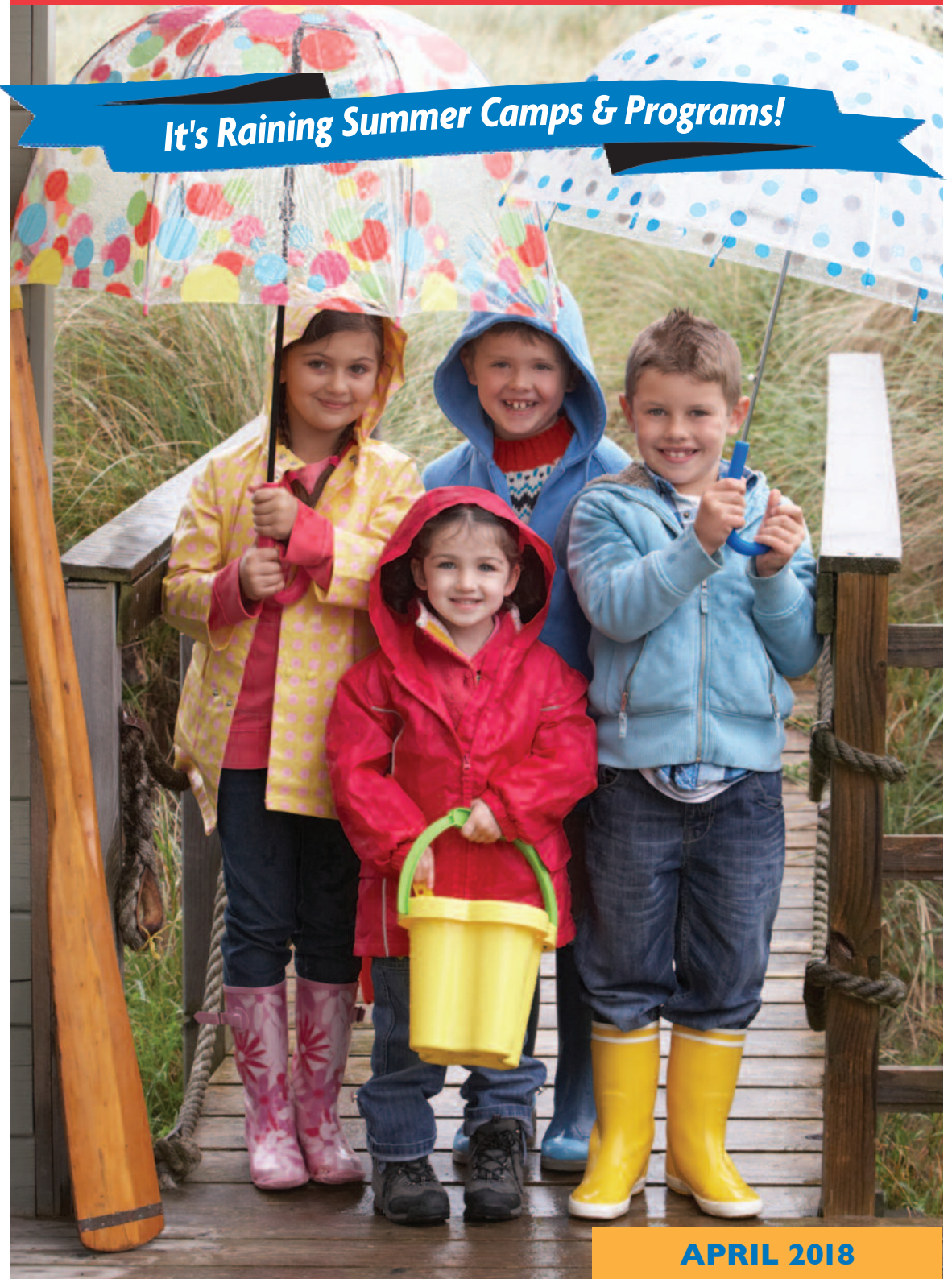
**Enter to Win
Tickets to
*Big Apple Circus!***



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It's Raining Summer Camps & Programs!



APRIL 2018

Hello, Spring! More Summer Camps & Programs!

by Suzanne Provencher,
Publisher/Editor

After a long, cold winter – dare I say it? “Hello, spring! It’s so great to see you again!”

It’s time to play outside, take a walk, breathe in some fresh air, take in a little warm sunshine and celebrate the season. As the vibrancy of color returns to our landscape – so, too, do warm feelings of change and rebirth and hope. So put away the mittens, the remote and the high tech devices – and go play outside!

Do you need ideas for your kids or grandkids this summer? **Check out Part 3 of 5 in our 11th Annual Summer Camps & Programs Showcase Series in this issue – on pages 8-11!** We have the largest camp showcases in print on the North Shore – with lots of great ideas



for kids this summer. You can also visit our online Camp Directory and link directly to the websites of the camps and summer programs you may wish to explore further. Many camps offer early-booking, sibling and friend discounts – so the time to explore

your options is now! **And if you have summer camps or programs and you need to reach local, North Shore MOMS and DADS – with children of all ages and interests and needs – I hope you’ll consider joining us in our May issue!** Our

moms and dads are looking now – as they seek summer options for their children. To advertise in our May issue, please secure your ad space by noon, Wed., April 18. To see our regular display advertising rates, sizes, available discounts and more, please visit us online at www.northshorefamilies.com/advertise. You can also see our current and recent issues online. Ask me for our special Summer Camps & Programs Showcase Series ad rates and sizes.

While *North Shore Children & Families* is a free publication, as a regular reader – you know that we are not like other freebies in any way, shape or form. We share “need to know information” that helps local families thrive and develop into all that they can be. We don’t just share “nice to know” information or fluff that is rehashed from another source. Our core editorial is custom and unique and written by a local, North Shore PhD, the leader of a non-profit organization that helps local kids do good things for others, an attorney, a published writer and guest contributors. Our pages will never be filled with articles on the best toys for kids – or what kids will be wearing this summer. We share tools and important information that helps local families, adults and kids of all ages develop into their fullest potential.

And last but not least – **ENTER TO WIN!** Check out our contest on page 2 and enter online for a chance to win tickets to **Big Apple Circus!** **The deadline to enter is April 22** – so enter today! Please, only one entry per person.

As always, thanks so much for spending some time with us again this month! We welcome you to visit us online so you can further engage with us and our sponsors, who make this free publication possible for you and your family. Here’s wishing you a very happy spring!

Until Next Time ~ Suzanne

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For Many Teens, Spring May Be Laced With Disappointments

by Dr. Kate Roberts, PhD

While most of us long for spring and yearn to bask in warm sunshine after enduring the long, harsh, record breaking winter, for a typical American teen, spring time is more of a rite of passage for realized and unrealized hopes and dreams.

It is during spring's inevitable renewal that many teens are faced with their own unalterable growth stemming from college acceptances or rejections, prom proposals, breaking away from one's family and coming into their young adult years.

It's important for parents to remember that life failures and how they are dealt with are the building blocks of personal character. These milestones that define the later years of adolescence are opportunities for growth and may provide the greatest personal learning curve after surviving disappointments. Parents need to recognize that for some teens, there may be moments this spring that are darker than their lowest moments of this past winter, but with your support, they will be okay. Disappointed teens can and will be happy again, once they know that they'll be fine even after their hopes are not realized.

As adults, we've experienced the value of disappointments in personal



growth – and as parents, we tend to forget this and want to protect our children from disappointment. We want to magically heal the wound of rejection and failed expectations before our teens fully experience their

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North Shore Children & Families



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for our upcoming deadlines.

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Teens & Spring Disappointments

Continued from page 3

pain. When we attempt to reject or fragment disappointments, we are teaching our children to compartmentalize aspects of themselves without fully accepting and integrating their failures into their complete sense of self. The healthy adult is fully integrated and embraces their shortcomings without the baggage of shame and humiliation. And parents with unresolved conflicts about their own successes and failures are most vulnerable to being triggered by their teen's victories and setbacks.

Here are eight ways to address disappointments and dreams during your teen's turbulent spring:

- 1. Do a self-assessment.** Where are you with your disappointments from years back? Do you still regret not making that college or sports team? Did you get wait listed at your number one college only to get a rejection letter after four nail biting months of hoping? Did your high school sweetheart dump you on the night of the prom and leave you with a distrust of all prom nights? Regardless of whether your version of any these events happened, as a parent you need to recognize that your resolution about your own disappointments is essential to being a supportive parent. Your child may be rejected by their first choice of college and they may accept that failure or not. How they react is their reaction, not yours, and they can learn to integrate all their experiences into a healthy sense of self, even if you did not.
- 2. Instill empathy.** A recent study indicated that most teens feel that academics are emphasized significantly more in their homes than



empathy and compassion. When a teen encounters the first big letdown, it's a chance for parents to teach empathy for others who have less and who may struggle more. Helping others in need builds gratitude, which is a great antidote to feeling down.

- 3. Teach humility.** When your teen is the most successful of his or her group and does not have to endure disappointment with the rest of their peers, remind your teen that boasting or over-emphasizing his or her victory may make others feel worse. Character is developed when a person is able to show sensitivity to others' needs as well as their own.
- 4. Accept your child's dreams with balanced reality.** Perhaps your child had lofty goals. So what? If they are talented and work hard, they are allowed to have them. Derek Jeter told anyone who would listen that he was going play baseball for the Yankees from the time he knew what that meant. His parents supported him because they felt his passion for the sport. The loftier the goal, the more dedication and the harder it is to attain. It's okay, because it's your teen's life, not yours – so allow them to experience and find their passions, whether it's baseball, carpentry or helping people; see your child for who they are and accept them.
- 5. Maintain perspective because your teen will not.** The reality of our culture is that the world is run by CEOs who were C students. Academics did not define our most successful business leaders. Support your child's far-reaching goals when they are dedicated to achieving them, while emphasizing to them that a college acceptance or rejection letter does not define a person.
- 6. Reframe disappointment.** Tom Brady waited a few years before landing his dream job as the Patriots' quarterback. His patience and commitment paid off because when he got his lucky break, he was prepared. If your child is certain that things should have worked out differently, whether it's a college acceptance or a certain prom date that's got them down, find a way to help them keep believing in themselves. Working hard at something and not getting the desired outcome the first time around is part of life. How they view themselves after the rejections will determine who asks them out next or where they land their next job.



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Raising Compassionate Children



Teaching Kids to Give Brings Happiness, Healing and Purpose

by Leah Okimoto, Founder/Executive Director

Some of my favorite moments with Aaron's Presents are from projects that bring together children and senior citizens in the community. Since everything we do is initiated and thought of by our young participants, the fact that these projects are happening means that the children themselves are thinking and caring about seniors and wanting to spend time with them. Seniors light up instantly when in the presence of children, and are touched by their kindness. And the kids feel the happiness that they are bringing. Even with seniors suffering from dementia or other mentally and physically debilitating illnesses, the children have demonstrated remarkable patience, understanding and compassion. They have also learned a great deal from asking questions and listening to fascinating stories from the seniors' lives.

Just this past week, three of our groups carried out the visits they had planned and their joy was infectious!

On Monday, 4th graders Stella, Hannah and Katie went to *Atria Marland Place* in Andover and spent an hour and a half talking with a group of senior women, making flower bouquets and giving them out to residents, making cards for them to give to their relatives and doing puzzles.



Stella, Hanna and Katie (L-R)

On Thursday, 6th graders Alison, Anahy, Mercy, Tranelle, Orenia and Nateline went to *Fairhaven Nursing Home* in Lowell and danced, gave

Continued on page 6

Be inspired.

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Raising Compassionate Children

Continued from page 5



Alison, Anahy, Mercy, Tranelle, Orenia and Nateline (L-R, top row first)

flowers, played *Uno* and catch and asked residents questions about their lives.

And on Saturday, 7th graders Lizbeidy and Esther visited the *Lowell Senior Center*, where seniors gather for camaraderie and lunch every Saturday. They brought flowers and served lunch, and got to talk with seniors about their lives. The girls couldn't believe that one woman, who had grown up in Lowell, recalled that all the kids would go home every day from school for lunchtime and then go back to school! One of the seniors was so happy that the girls had wanted to come, because she worries that young people today are losing the ability or desire to



Lizbeidy and Esther (front-back)

interact with people in person, and care about others such as the elderly.

That is certainly not what we are seeing, from the enthusiastic interest in our program from kids! However it is critical that as many children as possible have opportunities like this to practice compassion, thinking outside themselves and taking positive action with real face-to-face human interactions. They have the desire now at their young age, but if not nurtured, it could easily get lost in all of the other forces constantly turning their focus toward themselves and away from others.

Please visit www.aaronspresents.org to learn more about what our organization offers and how a child you know can apply to participate.

Leah Okimoto is the Executive Director of Aaron's Presents, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that she founded in 2014 in memory of her infant son, Aaron. Feel free to contact: Leah at lokimoto@aaronspresents.org or (978)809-5487; Kimberly LaBonte-Kay, North Shore Regional Director, at kimberly@aaronspresents.org or (978)886-6312; Ebony White, Lynn Project Mentor, at ebony@aaronspresents.org or (978)886-6257; Kate Adams, Lawrence Project Mentor, at kadams@aaronspresents.org or (978)886-6076; or Nana Younge, Lowell Project Mentor, at nana@aaronspresents.org or (978)886-9965.

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Happy Spring!

Looniverse: Stranger Things

Written by David Lubar;
Illustrated by Matt Loveridge
by Michelle Mullett

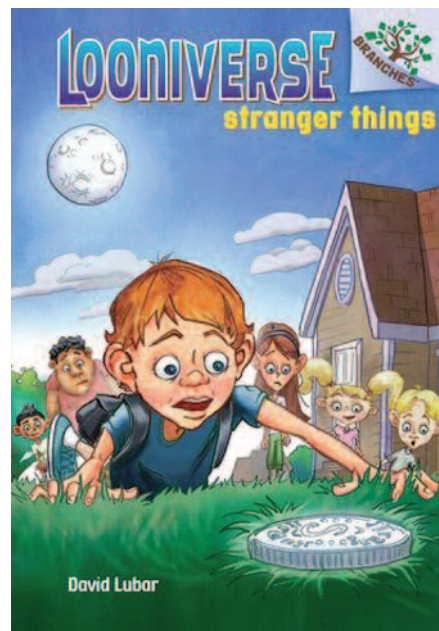
Parents might get a twinge of 1980s nostalgia just by reading the title, but this book isn't all about *Goonies* and glow in the dark bracelets. Honestly, this book is goofy and sometimes gross, but the writer is just giving the kids what they want.

It all starts with a little boy named Ed. Yep, just Ed.

"Everyone else has talents, hobbies or adventures worth talking about. Not me. I'm just plain old normal Ed, third grader at Complex Elementary School."

Well, good old Ed literally stumbles onto a silvery coin and that's when his life goes from boring to wacky hi-jinks. As far as illustrated chapter books go, this one has everything 1st-3rd graders will enjoy. There are plenty of simple black and white drawings to keep the story moving along. And the writing itself offers a lot of new vocabulary words as well as the occasional funny font change for special effects.

Throughout the book, I bumped into some awkward names and titles for things. Like when Ed is talking about



his little brother, Derwin. *"He goes to kindergarten at Albert Camus Primary School."* Hmm, I know this story talks a lot about looking for a mysterious *Stranger*, but I don't think I need a reference to the actual existential novel called *The Stranger* here. Who wants to explain Albert Camus to a 2nd Grader? Not me. I can barely get my Kindergartener to comprehend counting coins.

Scholastic is always a good bet for early reader books and this *Stranger Things* book is actually the first in a series that focuses on new readers. The other three books in the series are *Meltdown Madness*, *Dinosaur Disaster* and *Stage Fright*.

There is a whole new genre of books called *Branches* that's published by *Scholastic*. You can visit www.scholastic.com/branches to find other series with different reading levels. One series that sounds really interesting is called *The Notebook of Doom*.

So, back to Ed. Every time he hangs out with his friends, stranger things start to happen. One kid starts to levitate. Another one can turn his head 360 degrees while riding his bike. And later his little sister, Libby, turns into a real *Pied Piper* and brings an uninvited parade of rascally mice through their living room. Mom was not pleased and blamed it on Ed. Oh well.

The book ends with Ed answering the big question, which is, *Who is the Stranger?* And once he finds out for certain, the mystery is solved but

luckily it only opens the door to even more amazing adventures.

The back of the book has a great little section devoted to five thoughtful and curious questions about the book. Parents can do a quick and fun review with easy questions like, *"What are the two meanings of curiosity on Page 5?"* I really like this feature and would definitely look for this in the other series of books as well.

Overall, I recommend that your young readers explore this new *Looniverse*. You can find this book online and at many libraries throughout the North Shore.

Michelle Mullett is a local mom to two young boys and a published writer living on the North Shore. She is currently working on several picture books. You can follow her on Twitter @michelle_mullett.

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**Time to sign up
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Check out pages 8-11!**



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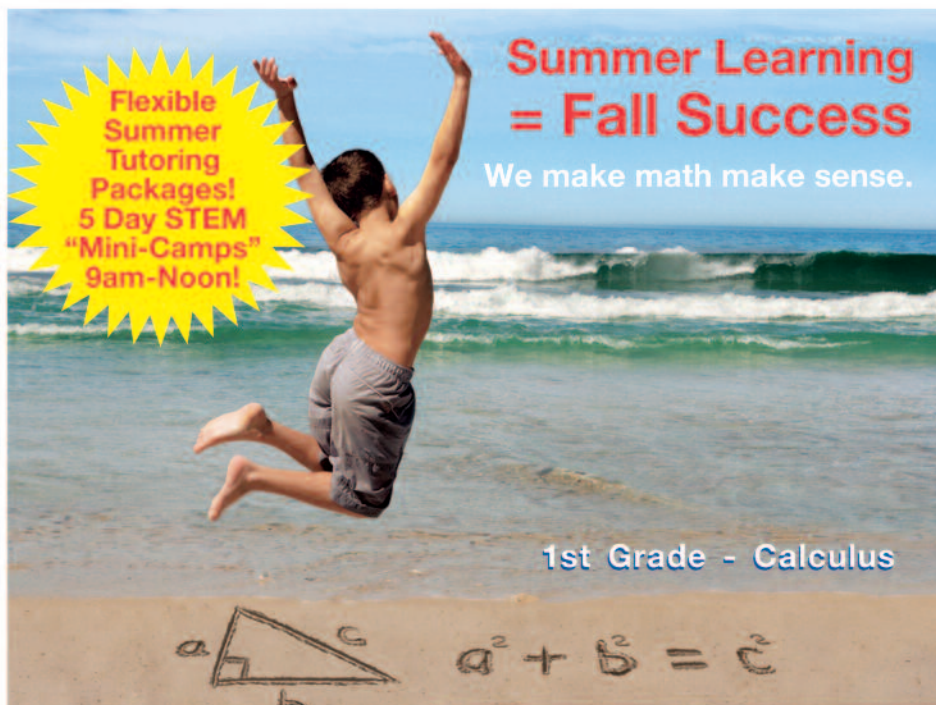



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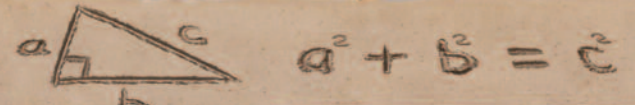
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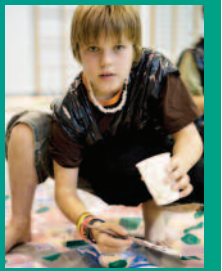
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Teens & Spring Disappointments

Continued from page 4

7. Take the long view. Keep the focus on the journey of life that teens are just beginning. College acceptance means very little in terms of reaching goals and achieving dreams. Overemphasizing a single event –



good or bad – is unrealistic in terms of overall life success and happiness.

8. Believe in resilience. When a child is faced with disappointment, it's an opportunity to teach resilience. Ask them to talk about their feelings and then get them involved in an activity that will build their confidence, despite the fact that they've just been shot down. Parental and family support are the best antidotes to outside disappointment and stress. Don't underestimate the power of a supportive family.

Regardless of where your teen lands this spring, keep your own perspective and this will help to ground them. Your teen will need your support and guidance long into adulthood. The best advice you can give is to help your teen decide what is truly important and give them strategies for creating the life that they want, including managing the wins and losses along the way.

Dr. Kate Roberts is a licensed child and school psychologist and family therapist with offices in Salem and Hamilton. She welcomes newcomers to her private practice. She specializes in cognitive-behavior therapy, family therapy, ADHD, anxiety and learning disabilities. She can be reached at kate@drkateroberts.com and www.drkateroberts.com.

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