# North Shore O FREED Children OX Families

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# 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 12th Annual Summer Camps & Programs
Showcase Series in this issue – on pages 7-9! 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 17. 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.

And last but not least – ENTER TO WIN! Check out our contest on page 3 and enter for a chance to win tickets to Big Apple Circus at Northshore Mall in Peabody! The deadline to enter is April 21 – 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



# For Many Teens, Spring Flowers May Be Laced With Disappointments

#### By Dr. Kate Roberts, PhD

While most of us long for spring and yearn to basque in warm sunshine after enduring the long, harsh 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 the know that they'll be fine even after their hopes are not met.

As adults, we've experienced the value of disappointments in personal growth. But as parents, we tend to forget that 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 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 teens' victories and setbacks.

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

I. 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,

Continued on page 4

# North Shore Children & Families



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Designed by Group One Graphics Printed by Seacoast Media Group

Please see page 3 for our upcoming deadlines.

Published and distributed monthly throughout the North Shore, 10x per year, and always online.

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#### For Many Teens...

Continued from page 3

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. 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 is required 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 farreaching 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.
- 7. 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 psychologist on the North Shore. Contact kate@drkateroberts.com or learn more at www.drkateroberts.com.



This year, Big Apple Circus's ALL-NEW SHOW begins right when you enter the tent, with pre-show thrills and activities, a dizzying array of culinary delights and beverages for all ages, and a VIP add-on for those who want to become part of the action.

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### Guest Contributor

# Go Out for Earth Day

By Lauri Diamantis



Earth Day formally began on April 22, 1970, as an environmental movement to increase awareness of issues plaguing our Earth. In 2018, Newsweek reported that approximately I billion people throughout 192 countries participated in projects to help protect the environment. Classrooms buzz with activities, towns solicit help for cleanup projects and legislature is passed, all with the common goal of preserving our natural world. This April, why not embark on an Earth

Day adventure with your family? *Keep Massachusetts Beautiful* is "taking action to make Massachusetts a cleaner, greener place to live, work and play." They offer community service projects such as the *Great MA Cleanup*, in which you can register your hometown and start a town-wide cleanup.

Do you like hiking or going to the beach with your family? Then how about joining the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation for *Park Serve Day* on April 27<sup>th</sup>? Volunteers will have the opportunity to help prepare state parks and beaches for visitors by clearing trails, collecting debris and planting

flowers to beautify spaces. If you'd rather stay closer to home, look on your city's or town's website for an upcoming project or contact your child's school to lend a helping hand with their events. Enlist ideas from your children and possibly come up with your own activity. Maybe it's as simple as picking up litter in a wooded area by your home or making a commitment to use reusable totes for all your shopping. Gather some neighbors and have a street-wide yard sale to raise money for a conservation project in your area. Whatever your family decides to accomplish on Earth Day, remember that you are making the world a greener, cleaner, healthier place for all.

https://keepmassbeautiful.org https://www.mass.gov/service-details/park-serve-day

Lauri Diamantis is a former elementary school teacher and mother from Andover. Her blog, www.thethanksgivingfamily.com, aims to enrich family through gratitude.



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8 North Shore Children & Families

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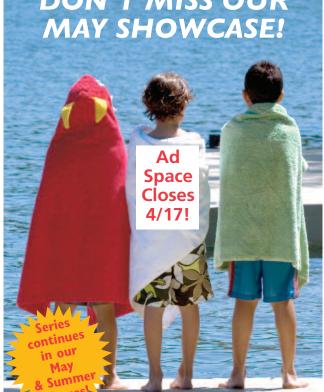
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Special Showcase ad sizes and pricing are offered for this series. To learn more or to secure your space, please contact Suzanne: suzanne@northshorefamilies.com.

# Raising Compassionate Children



# Teaching Kids to Give Brings Happiness, Healing and Purpose

# By Leah Okimoto, Founder/Exec. Director

What we are able to witness on a daily basis, and have experienced with over 1,000 children now since 2014, has been an incredible source of hope, inspiration and joy. We feel extremely fortunate to be able to be among kids when they are giving to others, contributing to their communities and showing generosity and kindness without any strings attached or receiving any praise or recognition. Why? Because when they are doing these things, that they

themselves have conceived and planned, they are happy. They are at peace. They feel valued, important and purposeful. They feel connected to their friends, to their community, to the larger world and have a role and place in that world. They get a break from their own issues and problems and instantly gain some perspective, realizing that others have challenges, too, and that we can reach out and help each other.

And in that moment, they want more and more of those feelings. So they ask things like, "When can we go



back?" "What are we doing next weekend?" "Can we do another project?" "How soon can we see them again?" And they say things like, "That was the best day of my entire life!" after visiting a nursing home for an hour.

With suicides and self-harm on the rise among young people at an alarming rate in the US, one of the things that we will continue to try to impress upon adults and parents for as long as we exist is, this is actually what your children want to do and feel. Kids you would never guess are writing about how worthless they feel, and how they will never meet the



standard of perfection they see in social media and the lives depicted there. They are struggling mightily, and



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we have seen time and again that taking some time to focus on someone else's needs and how they can make an impact outside themselves, using exactly who they are right now in a way that they are excited about and that values their unique gifts and traits, is like giving someone dying of thirst a pool of cool water to drink.

Here are three examples of recent projects:

Seven 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys came up with the idea to take a group of 5 foster children to Altitudes for an afternoon. They did such a great job actively engaging them and giving them their attention. It was pure joy to see all 13 kids jumping and laughing together, even though they had just met. They also went next door for dinner

afterwards and enjoyed getting to know each other more.

Michelle and Daniely, two normally shy 8<sup>th</sup> graders, love to read. So they put together a collection of their favorite books and donated them to various classrooms in their school. They put a sticker in each one and were excited to be leaving something behind as they prepare to graduate. They also were able to reconnect with some past teachers as they went around the school delivering their gifts.

And 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Avalyn, had a chance to take a pottery class. She loved it and wanted to give the experience to other kids who might not have the opportunity otherwise. So she

arranged an amazing class for seven other kids, donated by Chelsi Hanley of The Pottery Mill in Lowell. She realized that the only thing better than having a passion for something is sharing it with others.

If we can give this next generation a chance to truly experience what it feels like to care about the needs of others and take action to connect and help them, we can change the world together. For more information about how we can help a child you know to create and lead such an experience, please visit aaronspresents.org or contact one of our staff members at the end of this column. Our application is now on our website in English and Spanish.

## Children's Book Review

#### The Bad Seed

Written by Jory John; Illustrated by Pete Oswald; HarperCollins, 2017

#### Reviewed by Ann Britton Ranger

This story about a little sunflower seed with some very challenging behaviors was brought to my attention by Miss Karllee Hunt, an educator who works with preschoolers at the childcare center where I work. Karllee purchased the book with a few of her students in mind, hoping it would inspire them to make better choices when interacting with their peers. As I flipped through the pages, I realized the story's potential for bibliotherapy, or using books to help people struggling with difficult issues or situations.

The story begins with the little seed and his family, happily growing on a giant sunflower head. The sunflower is harvested, and the little seed suffers



a traumatic event when he loses his family, is nearly eaten and then spit out! From then on, he is labeled a *Bad Seed*. Living up to this name, he engages in many antisocial behaviors. He is mean to others, he lies, he cuts the line at school, etc. Many children who frequently act out and find themselves in trouble will identify with this situation.

Then one day, the *Bad Seed* decided he doesn't want to be bad anymore. Let's face it, it is hard to be happy if everyone is always upset with you. He decides to try to be good. He tries to use manners, saying "please" and "thank you". Although he sometimes makes mistakes, others come to realize that he is trying to make better choices. Doing good things makes the little seed feel good, and feeling good makes the little seed happy.

Miss Karllee reports that her preschoolers enjoyed the story. It is a good addition to the classroom library, and hopefully, it will inspire positive social interactions and encourage the children to keep trying to do their best.

Ann Britton Ranger is the Early Childhood Education Program Director at Beverly Children's Learning Center. She began collecting picture books when her own three children were young, and enjoyed sharing these stories while teaching preschool for many years.

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; Ebony White, Lynn Mentor, at ebony@aaronspresents.org; Franchesca Arias, Lawrence Mentor, at franchesca@aaronspresents.org; Jenry-Ann Diaz, Lawrence Mentor, at jenry@aaronspresents.org; Monica Veth, Lowell Mentor, at monica@aaronspresents.org; or Matt Wolterding, Lowell Mentor, at matt@aaronspresents.org.





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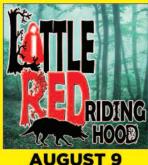
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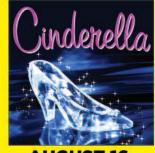


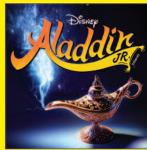
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