

August/September 2009



Scoop!



In this issue

- MbayKids Family Fun Day
- Potty Training 101
- Nut & Nanner S'mores

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The results are in!

A huge thank you goes out to everyone who completed our first-ever online MBayKids.com survey this summer. So many of you responded that I'd like to share with you what we learned. The findings were quite interesting!

First of all, we gained tremendous insight into how parents (and grandparents) use our website. While most of you consider the activity search function on www.MBayKids.com to be the most valuable part of the site, a surprising percentage of respondents (12%) didn't even realize that this search function existed! (It's on the upper left side of the front page of MBayKids.com.) Our *Happenings* page is important to over 75% of you who are using it to keep tabs on upcoming family-fun fare.

Among our online resource pages, respondents had utilized our *Birthday Party* page the most, but our *Arts & Crafts*, *Recipes*, *Restaurants*, *Music*, *Home-schooling*, *Nonprofits*, *Book Reviews* and *Preschools & Day Cares* pages have each generated quite a following of their own. (As a matter of fact, we received a few "please don't remove what's already there" pleas from parents who were concerned that we might eliminate some of these pages.) Many of you requested the addition of new resource pages dedicated to pediatrician advice, special needs families, military families, charter and private K-12 school options and community service opportunities, especially for high school students. And lots of you want access to "more discounts and coupons" through our site with "free kids' meals" ranking highest among the types of discounts desired.

Be assured that we are taking all of your feedback to heart – and we aren't taking anything away from the resources that are already on MBayKids.com!

Our mission is to enrich the lives of local families by providing them with the information they want and need most. So, until every one of you can honestly respond the way one parent did with "I'm not sure what else you can do. Thanks for all your hard work," we'll be here working diligently to fulfill our mission.

And, of course, if we hear of any free kids' meals along the way, we'll be sure to let you know!

Lori McDonnal
Editor

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Cover photo by Kathy Pimentel, *Katalina Photography*

On our cover: Five year-old **Mari Horwath** gets ready for kindergarten this fall by checking out the great selection of books to read at **Thinker Toys** in Carmel.

Published 8 times per year, **Scoop!** is a supplement to our website, **MBayKids.com**. **Scoop!** is mailed to Central Coast parents FREE of charge and is available at select family-friendly locations throughout the Central Coast. To receive future free copies of **Scoop!** magazine, register at www.MBayKids.com/sign_up.asp. For information on how your organization or school can distribute issues of **Scoop!** each month, contact us at (831) 751-1678.

For information on advertising opportunities, contact Kim Georgalos (831) 595-6943.



MBayKids would like to thank each of the following contributors for sharing their **Scoop!** with us this month:

Laurie Bend - Sweet Stuff

Laurie is a mom, community volunteer, Girl Scout leader and small business owner. As a mother of three, she loves to test out recipes on her kids so she can pass them on to **Scoop!** readers.



Michelle Chisum - MamaPreneur

MamaPreneur Michelle is the owner/operator of Red Rooster Company LLC under which she manages The Stork Ladies, A Perfect Present and Celebrate Mama!™ Monterey. Her most important role in life, however, is being mama for two young sons.



Lara Devlin - Happenings

Assistant to the Artistic Director at ARIEL Theatrical, Inc. in Salinas, Lara directs and choreographs children's productions. She also teaches ballroom dance to 5th graders for Dancing Classrooms of Monterey Bay and provides movement therapy for Monterey Transition students.



Pierre LaMothe, M.D., FAAP - House Calls

Dr. LaMothe has practiced pediatrics at Monterey Peninsula Pediatric Medical Group for 22 years. He and his wife have two sons ages 19 and 22 years old.



Jennifer McDonnal - Arts & Crafts

Jennifer is a student at Buena Vista Middle School and has been intimately involved with the production of **Scoop!** since its inception in 2006. In addition to writing, Jennifer has a passion for music, theatre arts and her two "rescue bunnies," Raelyn and Elvis.



Susan Oros, M.A. - Special Needs

Susan is cofounder of Special Kids Crusade and is the mother of three children: a 12 yr. old son with Down Syndrome, a 9 yr. old daughter with autism and a 7 yr. old son who is typically developing.



Kathy Pimentel - Photographer

Kathy is the owner of Katalina Photography and is a "locally grown" photographer, having lived in Salinas nearly all her life. She and her husband Rick live in Salinas with their two children, dogs, cats, fish and turtle!



Janine Schurman - Homeschooling

Janine is a former credentialed elementary school teacher who left the public school setting to be a full-time homeschooling parent to her two children, ages 7 and 10.



MBayKids Family Fun Day

At ARIEL's home
The Wilson Children's Theatre
320 Main Street, Salinas
Saturday, August 29

Join us for our 2nd Annual **MBayKids Family Fun Day** at the home of ARIEL Theatrical, The Wilson Children's Theatre, on **Saturday, August 29 at 2:00 pm.**

Your MBayKids tickets will include:

- Matinee showing of **Cinderella** (2:00 pm show)
- Family-friendly after-show party with treats from **Beriyo by TCBY**
- Royal Goody bags for the kids (ages 10 and under)
- Picture-taking with the cast of **Cinderella**



Reservations are required and space is limited!
Tickets are \$10 per person and must be purchased by August 20, 2009.

Don't miss this family-fun event, courtesy of ARIEL Theatrical & MBayKids.
Children are invited to attend in their finest prince & princess attire!

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The "Special Needs" of Special Education

by Susan Oros, M.A.

Monterey County is currently cutting, updating and revising its special education system. In two short school years, teachers and instructional aides have been cut, field trips virtually eliminated, and budgets for classroom materials curtailed. As the parent of a neurotypical 8 year old, I am concerned about the cuts to education in general. However, the cuts to special education may be short-sighted and are not in the best interests of either our special needs students or our society, as a whole, in the long-run.

Why do special needs students need additional staffing?

Extra adult staffing, in general, is needed to help students with special needs achieve goals while being maintained in a safe environment. Students with special needs develop slowly and/or unevenly. In group settings, they often have trouble regulating themselves to sit still, attend and learn. It can be like teaching to a group of preschoolers who have not emotionally matured. I watch my neurotypical 8 year old grow and I marvel at how "easily" he develops.

Students who are considered to be "high functioning" and who are mainstreamed often also have difficulty regulating themselves and therefore they, too, may require extra staff support. Safety is an important factor in determining staff to student ratios. Students with special needs can wander off and many do not have the language ability to get appropriate help. This can be true even for students considered to be "higher functioning." Another safety concern is injurious behaviors, either to self or others. Targeted behavioral support is often needed to minimize, and hopefully to extinguish, such behaviors.

If the other students can't go on field trips, why should these students?

Special education teachers generally don't spend financial resources on textbooks and standardized materials. They often have to modify and make their own materials tailored for each student. Field trips are important for community-based learning such as learning to read traffic signals before crossing the street, riding the bus, learning to exchange money for an item, etc. Additionally, it's crucial for long-term growth to teach appropriate behavior in the community.

Why should we spend so much on these students when they'll grow up to live in group homes or still need assistance?

As a mother with two such children, I want to say, "Because it's the right thing to do!" But there is also a more practical matter. Fifty years ago, doctors told parents that these individuals could not learn and they should just be institutionalized. Hence, many were not even toilet-trained. As adults, these individuals required more hands-on care, which was costly. Special education often encompasses self-help and functional life skills so that, as adults, the level of their care can be minimized. Education ends at the age of 22 for many of these individuals and adult resources and support is scarce compared to what is received while they are children. Educating these special individuals early will impact their ability to live as independently and as productively as possible which will cost society less in the long run.

It is a tenuous time for all. I hope, though, that the basic needs of special education students will not be lost. As a county community, we can develop creative solutions so that all youth, regardless of abilities, can learn and grow. Children with special needs can bring out the best in us and this "us" includes children without special needs, too.

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Treasure Books

by Jennifer McDonnal

Never judge a book by its cover...what's inside may surprise you! These treasure books are fun to make and, with self-adhesive sheets of craft foam, they are incredibly easy to create!

You will need:

- Empty cereal box
- 2 different colors of craft foam (*Self-adhesive is recommended, but regular foam will work as well.*)
- Fabric ribbon
- Foam lettering, shapes, or stickers
- White card stock or white poster board
- Pencil, ruler, scissors and glue

Instructions:

1. Cut along the top, bottom and right side edges of the front panel of the cereal box so the panel opens like the cover of a book.
2. Cut out a strip of ribbon long enough to wrap around the width of the box (see photo, at right), with extra room to tie a bow on the finished "book." For larger cereal boxes, use at least a 3 foot strip; smaller, single-serve boxes need a minimum 18" piece.
3. Affix the ribbon to the outside of the box with glue or tape.



4. Using the front panel of your box as a size guide, cut out two same-color pieces of craft foam, one to cover the front "open" panel and one to cover the back panel of the cereal box. Affix foam to panels with glue or by removing paper backing from self-adhesive foam.

5. To create a binding look to your "book," cut a rectangular piece of the second color of foam to cover the height of the box and extend

approximately 1" on either side of the left edge of the box.

6. To create the pages-look edges of the "book," use the cereal box as a guide to trace and cut three pieces of white card stock to cover three of the box edges - the top, the bottom, and the right. Using a pencil and a ruler, draw thin parallel lines, spaced closely together, on the card stock to create the look of pages. Glue these pieces to the edges of the cereal box.



7. Decorate with left-over foam pieces, decorate with a fun title, tie the ribbon and voila! You have your very own special book...just waiting to be filled with treasures!

At Beverly's, we found 8 1/2" x 11" 5-sheet multi-color packages of self-adhesive craft foam for \$3.99, fabric ribbon (3 yards) for \$1.00, and a 20" x 28" sheet of white poster board for \$1.49.

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Consider Yourself at Home! *Oliver!* comes to life at the Outdoor Forest Theater

by Lara Devlin



Few things are better than being outside during the "warm" late-summer months. One special place to enjoy the outdoors is the oldest al fresco community theater west of the Rockies. Situated close to the heart of downtown Carmel is the Outdoor Forest Theater, founded in 1910. The historic amphitheater, located on Santa Rita and Mountain View, is framed by towering pines and draped in stars, providing a majestic backdrop for a host of wonderful productions such as this season's family treat, *Oliver!*, which runs from August 13 through September 27.

Brought to you by Pacific Repertory Theatre, *Oliver!*

has been hailed as one of the best-loved family musicals of all time. This all-new production of Lionel Bart's magical musical, based upon the Charles Dickens novel, *Oliver Twist*, is directed and choreographed by Katie O'Bryan. A cast of over 40 children have been working hard to bring this classic, heart-warming tale of a young orphan whose story begins with an empty stomach and a little bit of courage, to life. "This show is filled with excitement," says Maris Welch who plays one of the orphans. "Lots of people will like it!" Ben Phillips, one of the two children cast to play Oliver, agrees, adding "And it's just a really great show."



Attending a show at the Outdoor Forest Theater is truly a fun-for-the-whole-family treat. Families can arrive early with a picnic in hand, find seats or spread out on a blanket near the two stone fireplaces on either side of the stage. Don't forget your coats and cocoa...the songs in *Oliver!* are heart warming but the summer nights in Carmel can be chilly!

Oliver! will be on stage at Carmel's Outdoor Forest Theater Thursdays through Sundays,

August 13 through September 27. Children's ticket prices are \$7. Adult ticket prices range from \$28 (Thursdays and Sundays) to \$35 (Fridays and Saturdays). Special pricing for seniors and military personnel are also available. For ticket information, contact the Golden Bough Box Office at (831) 622-0100 or visit www.pacrep.org.

Note: Parents of very young children who are easily scared should note there are a few moments that may be considered frightening.

Oliver! rehearsal photos courtesy of Tara Hendrick Devlin, of Tara's Take ~ Slice of Life Photography.



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Program made possible with the support of the Arts Council for Monterey County and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Potty Training 101

by Pierre LaMothe, M.D.

Toilet training is a big step in a child's maturation. Unfortunately your child may not see it that way. There are a few tools you can use, however, to make the process run a bit smoother.

Ready...Set...GO! (please?!) Potty training is easiest if *he* is ready. (I'll use a boy in this example.) Some signs of readiness are: 1.) He tells you he is wet or asks to be changed. 2.) He has simple dressing skills. 3.) He imitates you. 4.) He goes two hours between diaper changes. Girls may be ready as young as 24 months, boys not until several months later. There are many normal 3 year-olds in diapers. Potty training is easiest if the parents allow him to move at his own pace, are not judgmental, and accept "accidents" as inevitable. A deadline, such as a start date for preschool, adds stress. They are *his* bladder and colon; the idea of potty needs to originate in *his* brain. If potty training is not going well, put him back in diapers.



Helpful Potty Training Tips

- **Buy a potty seat that sits on the floor.** He will be more comfortable with his feet flat on the floor rather than propped high in the air over an adult size toilet. Suggest he sit on the potty with his clothes on. There is no pressure to produce, he is just getting comfortable and copying you. Get some super hero undies and display them so he can see how cool it will be to be in big boy pants. Of course you can tease him a little, "Now, you wouldn't pee on Superman, would you?"
- **Watching their older cousin use the potty can have a bigger impact than months of your pleading.** Children frequently have a "Bingo!" moment when they get potty trained. Being around older children is often key.
- **Explore the great outdoors.** Children love to run around naked. So put the potty seat in a safe outdoor place and let them roam in the buff. The "golden arches," tinkle targets and the potty might help him make the connection.
- **Foster his independence.** Dress him in simple clothes he can get on and off.
- **Praise your child for a job well done.** I think it's perfectly fine to add some candy

as a reward. Be ready to change the rules as he gets the idea. One of my sons learned to poop one tiny pellet several times a day to maximize his profit of Hershey's Kisses.

- **Continue to help your child in the bathroom after they are fully potty trained.** Girls need reminders to wipe from front to back. Boys need to make certain the toilet seat will really stay up when they put it up.
- **Pull-Ups®-style disposable training pants are great for a child who is almost potty trained.** This is particularly true when they are away from home and a bit more likely to have an accident. However, some children *really* like their Pull-Ups® and get stuck at that stage. What is not to like? They have cool characters, a comfy snug fit and you can pee and poop in them any time you like. I suggested to a mom with a 3 year old son in Pull-Ups® to put him back in diapers. He asked his mom why he was using diapers again and she said, "Dr. LaMothe said to." He barked back, "Well, call him right away and tell him I want my pull-up!" (He was in undies in a few days.)

A Job Halfway Done. Some children get the idea of peeing in the potty and wear undies without accidents. However, they still need and ask for a diaper to poop in. This is perfectly okay. Work with him. Do not insist he wear undies all the time. He does not want to poop in the potty, or his SpongeBob undies. His solution is to not poop. That can cost you a trip to the ER at 2 am for blood tests and an abdominal CT Scan. That is one very painful and expensive poop!

Continued on page 18

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Pierre LaMothe, MD, FAAP



Curriculum, Resources and, yes...Worries!

Homeschooling from an Elementary School Teacher's Perspective (Part 2)

by Janine Schurman

Janine Schurman is a homeschooling mom of two who also happens to have had six years of classroom experience as a credentialed elementary school teacher. Last month, Janine shared with Scoop! the ways in which her teaching experience has impacted her role as a homeschooling parent. This month, Janine shares thoughts on curriculum, local resources and how she, too, struggles with the insecurities that most homeschooling

parents face when it comes to taking on the responsibility of educating their own children.

Scoop!: How do you go about choosing the best homeschooling curriculum for your children?

Janine: I have to confess that I made a lot of mistakes initially and spent a lot of money on things that neither I nor my kids liked. My 7 year-old and 10 year-old have very different learning styles and I have to make individual curriculum choices for each of them based on that. I do a lot of networking, talking to other moms and getting an idea of what has worked for their children. I search through books and homeschooling magazines to get a feel for the most recommended and loved curriculums. The number one thing for me is to actually get my hands on material before I make a purchase and, if at all possible, go through a few "test lessons" with my kids. The research never stops and the desire to find something that might work a little better never ceases.

Scoop!: Do you attend homeschooling conventions?

Janine: I attend conventions organized by both the *Christian Home Educators Association of California* (CHEA) and by the *Valley Home Educators of Modesto*. I am always impressed with the keynote speakers and the number of high quality vendors that attend both and I always leave feeling rejuvenated and excited. I can easily get overwhelmed, however, by the sheer magnitude of information available. To make the most of each convention, I make a plan beforehand to determine which vendor's booths I want to see and which conferences and workshops are on top of my list. I know I cannot get to everything so prioritizing is a must.

Scoop!: What local resources do you tap into for support?

Janine: *Educational Resources of Monterey County* (ERMCO) has been a godsend. During my first year of homeschooling, I began to realize that I wanted a

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resource that would provide my kids with an opportunity to take classes with small groups of other children in subject areas that interest them and/or that I might not know about. ERMCO is the perfect fit! My children take classes, go on field trips, have music lessons and have even taken an educational trip to the East Coast.

Scoop!: What do you most worry about as a homeschooling parent?

Janine: My worries change on a daily basis! I guess the thing that I worry about most is, "Am I giving them enough? Are they learning all they need to learn?" I second-guess myself constantly. In a traditional school environment, a teacher often teaches one grade level for several years so that she/he can see what works and improve on it over time. With homeschooling, each year represents a new grade level, although my younger child does reap some of the benefits of what I learned by teaching my oldest. Also, certain subjects are stronger for me as a teacher and I hope that *my* weaknesses don't become *their* weaknesses. To combat this, I try to enroll them in classes for subjects that I feel are not my strong points, such as art.

Scoop!: How long do you plan to continue homeschooling your children?

Janine: Homeschooling was never a part of my husband's and my plan before we had children, so we make it a point to try and not plan more than one year at a time. Being a family of faith, we really feel that we were led into this journey. We say a lot of prayers and take it one year at a time. If we are led to do something differently in the future, then we will.

To read part one of Janine's article, as well as all of our previous homeschooling articles, visit www.MBayKids.com/homeschool.asp.

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Nut & Nanner S'mores

by Laurie Bend

August is National S'mores Month and to carry on our tradition of giving our readers the **Scoop!** on a great s'mores recipe, we're presenting a quick and easy s'more that's packed with healthy ingredients!

No marshmallow roasting is required so these can be created in a snap. And, with plastic utensils, kids of all ages can help with the preparation. Be sure to have plenty of napkins handy...these s'mores are messy!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 package Chips Ahoy!® Peanut Butter Chunky Cookies
- 1 jar marshmallow creme
- 1 jar Nutella® spread
- Sliced bananas

DIRECTIONS:

1. Slice bananas in approximately 1/3 inch slices.
2. Spread 1/2 tablespoon of Nutella® on one side of your cookie.
3. Place 2 banana slices on the Nutella®.
4. Place 1 spoonful of marshmallow creme on top of bananas.
5. Cover with a second cookie. Enjoy!

Celebrate this MamaPreneur!

by Michelle Chisum

Jackie Scott Educational Tutor

(831) 214-1810

jackiemomof3@gmail.com



Going back to school is a big adjustment for kids that have spent the summer full of fun and games. With over 20 years of experience in education, local MamaPreneur Jackie Scott helps children get back on track with their academics before school even starts. As mama to Matthew (8), Alissa (4), and Jackson (2), Jackie has a passion for helping children find success in school. She boasts, "It is so gratifying to work one-on-one with kids and see them discover their ability to do things that they never thought they could do."

Along with working in the classroom for several years, Jackie, a credentialed teacher in both multiple subject elementary and single subject English, built a business of private tutoring that she can now combine with being a full-time mama. "The challenges of balancing work with family are always present,"

Continued on page 18



REEL IN THE FUN at the monterey county fair AUGUST 12 - 16, 2009

Kids' Day

Wednesday, August 12

Kids under 12 FREE all day

All ages FREE admission till 3 pm with a non-perishable food item for Monterey County Food Bank

Read & Ride Contest

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Points of View. If I asked you to make a list of the benefits of having your toddler out of diapers you could write a long list. His list is a lot shorter. Toddlers love to get the upper hand on their parents. If he knows that you will do back handsprings to get him out of diapers he will use that to his advantage. So take it easy and make it fun. If it is a struggle postpone it; he is not ready. One day he will be. If you are having problems, consult your child's doctor.

★—————★
MamaPreneur - Continued from page 17

she explains, "but that is the beauty of owning your own business; you get to determine the balance."

Jackie not only has a history of building great rapport with students of all ages and can assist them to accelerate beyond what they are getting out of the classroom, but she tutors in all elementary subjects, specializing in organization issues, test taking skills and preparation, writing skills, problem solving and mathematics. When asked of her biggest accomplishment thus far, she exclaims without hesitation, "Every single time I get to be part of a child's 'Ah Ha!' moment, it is a huge accomplishment." She continues, "Helping kids transition from struggle to success is a huge privilege and always feels like an enormous accomplishment for both of us."

As a wife and a mother of three, Jackie Scott has worked hard to establish a successful balance between her career and her family life. Her advice to other mamas, striving for the same, is simple. "Go for it," she says. "You have nothing to lose and everything to gain."



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