

26TH ANNUAL LGBTQ-FRIENDLY INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS DIRECTORY

September-October 2024 | Issue #156

Gay Parent
LGBTQ gayparentmag.com



ALEX REZNIK,
creator of Complete Playground in NYC

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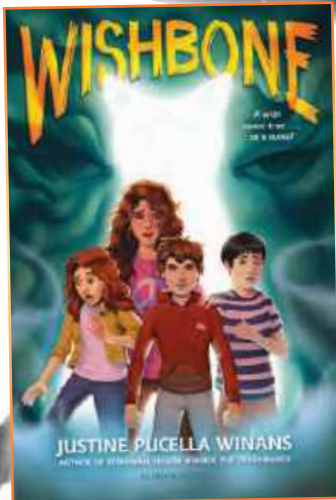
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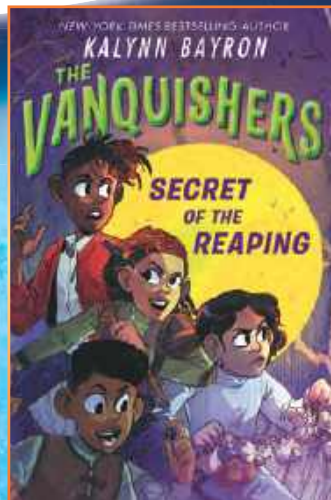
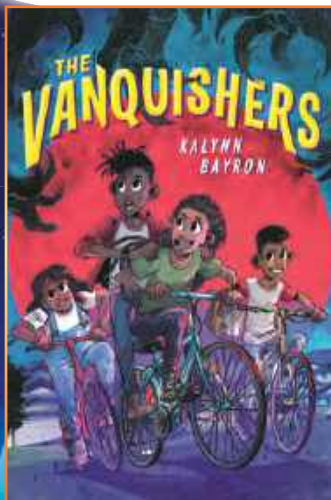
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25th Annual Gay Parent Magazine LGBTQ Friendly Independent School Directory

Over 150 schools, ranging from nursery to college and afterschool. Listed by state, the list includes schools for students with learning differences, bilingual schools, all girls or all boys, boarding and religious schools. - page 12

ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT:

City and Country School - Dr. Frank Patti advises four steps to selecting a private school in New York City. Dr. Patti is the principal of City and Country School in NYC and a gay dad. - page 32



ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT:

Stratford School - Jeanne Huybrechts of Stratford School writes about the benefits of children participating in extra-curricular activities. - page 36

Decoding Project 2025 and Its Implications for LGBTQ+ Rights - Attorney Angela Giampolo writes about the threat of Project 2025 and how LGBTQ+ individuals and families can legally protect themselves. - page 43



Surviving Hurricane Dorian - Tara Pyfrom, her wife, their 6 year old daughter, and their five dogs struggled to survive a category 5 hurricane flooding their home. - page 49

Coming Out Later in Life - In a new memoir, Suzette Mullen writes about falling in love with Wendy after raising two sons with her husband. - page 59



Catching up with the Bundy family of Virginia - A lot has happened since GPM last featured Kindall and Michelle Bundy, including welcoming two teens into their family. - page 67

A Welcoming Playground in NYC - Gay dad Alex Reznik is the brainchild of a new indoor play space called Complete Playground. Inspired by his own son, the playground also caters to neuro-atypical children. - page 74



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Cover photo courtesy of Alex Reznik. Photos this page, top to bottom, photo courtesy of Ya Londa, Ash Castro, Carol Escobar, and Kindall Bundy.

Instead of giving answers, we explore all of their questions.

Learn more and tour:
cityandcountry.org/nygayparent

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Family photo share from Ash Castro



Family photo share from Carol Escobar



Family photo share from Ya Londa

We love to hear from you. Send us your feature requests, photos, and comments by email at gayparentmag@gmail.com or through www.facebook.com/gay.parent.magazine. ▼

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26th Annual Gay Parent Magazine Independent Schools Directory

Welcome to our 26th Annual Private Schools Directory where we highlight our advertising independent schools ranging from preschool to college. Most are co-ed but a few schools are all girls or all boys. Most are day schools but also include boarding. Some schools indicated are for students with learning differences, teach language immersion or are religious. The schools are located in California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington. Contact information for each school is listed alphabetically by state, links listed are for reference only, click on the link located under their display ad. Visit our web site at www.gayparentmag.com to read short descriptions of some of the schools.

CALIFORNIA

Abraham Joshua Heschel Day School
17701 Devonshire St.
Northridge, CA 91325
818-368-5781
www.heschel.com
TK - 8th grade
See ad on page 75

Alta Vista School
Lower School
450 Somerset St.
San Francisco, CA 94134
415-467-3700
Middle School
2558 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
415-510-8492
www.altavistaschool.org
Junior K - 8th grade
See ad on page 57

Bentley School
K - 8th grade
1 Hiller Dr.
Oakland, CA 94618
510-843-2512
9th - 12th grade
1000 Upper Happy Valley Rd.
Lafayette, CA 94549
925-283-2101
www.bentleyschool.org
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 22

The Berkeley School
Early Childhood
2030 Francisco St.
Berkeley, CA 94709
510-849-8340
K - 8th grade
1310 University Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94702
510-665-8800
www.theberkeleyschool.org
See ad on page 60

Besant Hill School
of Happy Valley
8585 N. Ojai Santa Paula Rd.
Ojai, CA 93023
805-646-4343
www.besanthill.org
9th - 12th grade, day and boarding school
See ad on page 39

Brentwood School
K - 6th grade
12001 Sunset Blvd.
310-471-1041
7th - 12th grade
100 S. Barrington Pl.
310-476-9633
Los Angeles, CA 90049
www.bwscampus.com
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 52

The Carey School
One Carey School Lane
San Mateo, CA 94403
650-345-8205

www.careyschool.org
Preschool - 5th grade
See ad on page 41

The Center for Early Education
563 N. Alfred St.
West Hollywood, CA 90048
323-651-0707
www.centerforearlyeducation.org
Toddler - 6th grade
See ad on page 62

Charles Armstrong School
1405 Solana Dr.
Belmont, CA 94002
650-592-7570
www.charlesarmstrong.org
2nd - 8th grade, for students with dyslexia and related learning differences.
See ad on page 37



Convent & Stuart Hall Schools of the Sacred Heart-San Francisco
2222 Broadway
San Francisco, CA 94115
415-563-2900
www.sacredsfs.org
K - 12th grade, educates boys and girls, separately and together.
See ad on page 61

Cow Hollow School
387 Moraga Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94129
415-921-2328
www.cowhollowschool.org
ages 2.6 - 5.9 yrs.
See ad on page 63

Crestview Preparatory School
140 Foothill Blvd.
La Canada, CA 91011
818-922-0925
www.crestviewprep.org
K - 6th grade

See ad on page 21

The Crowden School
1475 Rose St.
Berkeley, CA 94702
510-559-6910
www.crowden.org
3rd - 8th grade, ensemble-based curriculum
See ad on page 14

Echo Horizon School
3430 McManus Ave.
Culver City, CA 90232
310-838-2442
www.echohorizon.org
Pre-K - 6th grade
See ad on page 27



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Independent Schools
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Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley

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Berkeley, CA 94710
510-549-3867
Middle School Campus
901 Grayson St.
Berkeley, CA 94710
510-549-2851
www.eb.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 11

GATE Academy

1 Saint Vincent Dr.
San Rafael, CA 94903
415-491-4700
www.gateacademy.org
K - 8th grade, for academically
gifted students
See ad on page 23

**German International School
of Silicon Valley**

310 Easy St.
Mountain View, CA 94043
650-254-0748
www.gissv.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 22

The Harker School

500 Saratoga Ave.
San Jose, CA 95129
408-249-2510
www.harker.org
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 7



Imagination Lab School

Cubberly Community Center
4000 Middlefield Rd.
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650-460-8940
www.imagination-school.org
TK - 8th grade
See ad on page 45

**International School
of Los Angeles**

1105 W. Riverside Dr.
Burbank, CA 91506
818-994-2961
www.internationalschool.la
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 38

**The International School
of San Francisco**

(formerly French American
International School &
International High School)
Main Building
150 Oak St.
San Francisco, CA 94102

415-558-2000
Maternelle
1155 Page St.
San Francisco, CA 94117
415-231-5733
www.internationalsf.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 27

Julia Morgan School for Girls

5000 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94619
510-632-6000
www.juliamorganschool.org
6th - 8th grade, girls school
See ad on page 33

**Lake Tahoe
Preparatory School**

255 Olympic Valley Rd.
PO Box 2180
Olympic Valley, CA 96146
530-583-8665
www.laketahoeprep.org
9th - 12th grade, boarding school
See ad on page 25

Mid-Peninsula High School

1340 Willow Rd.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-321-1991
www.mid-pen.org
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differences.
See ad on page 73

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San Francisco, CA 94103
415-992-8520
www.millenniumschool.org
6th - 8th grade
See ad on page 25

The Oaks School
6817 Franklin Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90028
323-850-3755
www.oaksschool.org
K - 6th grade
See ad on page 55

Park Day School
360 42nd St.
Oakland, CA 94609
510-653-0317
www.parkdayschool.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 11

Presidio Knolls School
250 10th St.
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-202-0770
www.presidioknolls.org
Preschool - 8th grade, Mandarin immersion school
See ad on page 18

Prospect Sierra School
Elementary
2060 Tapscott Ave.
El Cerrito, CA 94530
510-809-9036
Middle School
960 Avis Dr.
El Cerrito, CA 94530
510-809-9000
www.prospectsierra.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 52

PS1 Pluralistic School One
1225 Broadway
Santa Monica, CA 90404
310-394-1313 x107
www.pstone.org
K - 6th grade
See ad on page 22

The Saklan School
1678 School St.
Moraga, CA 94556
925-376-7900
www.saklan.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 30

The San Francisco School
300 Gaven St.
San Francisco, CA 94134
415-239-5065
www.sfschool.org
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 68

San Francisco Schoolhouse
735 Fell St.
San Francisco, CA 94117
415-221-3435
www.sfschoolhouse.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 34

St. James' Episcopal School
Preschool Campus
625 S. Gramercy Pl.
Los Angeles, CA 90005
Elementary Campus
625 S. St. Andrews Pl.
Los Angeles, CA 90005
213-382-2315
www.sjsla.org
Preschool - 6th grade
See ad on page 61

Sterne School
838 Kearny St.
San Francisco, CA 94108
415-922-6081
www.sterneschool.org
4th - 12th grade
See ad on page 70

Stratford School
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1999 S. Bascom Ave., Ste. 400
Campbell, CA 95008
408-973-7320
www.stratfordschools.com/tours
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 26

Synapse School
3375 Edison Way
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-294-4570
www.synapseschool.org
TK - 8th grade
See ad on page 40

Town School for Boys
2750 Jackson St.
San Francisco, CA 94115
415-921-3747
www.townschool.com
K - 8th grade, boys school
See ad on page 19

Valley Montessori School
1273 N. Livermore Ave.
Livermore, CA 94551
925-455-8021
www.vmschool.org
age 18 months - 8th grade
See ad on page 62

The Waverly School
67 W. Bellevue Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91105
626-792-5940
www.thewaverlyschool.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 41

The Wesley School
4832 Tujunga Ave.
North Hollywood, CA 91601
818-508-4717
www.wesleyschool.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 19



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See ad on page 31

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8509 Higuera St.
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www.thewillows.org
DK - 8th grade
See ad on page 51

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San Rafael, CA 94903
415-993-5533
Transitions SF:
360 9th Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94118
415-766-2395
www.winstonprep.edu
4th - 12th grade, for students
with learning differences
See ad on page 48

York School
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Monterey, CA 93940

831-372-7338
www.york.org
8th - 12th grade
See ad on page 59

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528 Pomfret St.
Pomfret, CT 06258
860-963-6740
www.rectoryschool.org
K - 9th grade, day and boarding
school
See ad on page 65

Winston Preparatory School

57 West Rocks Rd.
Norwalk, CT 06851
203-229-0465
www.winstonprep.edu
4th - 12th grade, for students
with learning differences
See ad on page 48

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Aidan Montessori School
2700 27th St. NW
Washington DC 20008
202-387-2700
www.aidanschool.org
age 18 months - 6th grade

See ad on page 46

Lowell School
1640 Kalmia Rd. NW
Washington DC 20012
202-577-2000
www.lowellschool.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 42

National Presbyterian School
4121 Nebraska Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-537-7500
www.nps-dc.org
age 3 - 8th grade
See ad on page 36

School for Friends

2201 P St. NW
Washington DC 20037
202-328-1789
www.schoolforfriends.org
ages 18 months - 5
See ad on page 50

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www.stalbansschool.org
4th - 12th grade, boys school
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Independent Schools
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202-243-1800
www.wis.edu
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 57

FLORIDA

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Jacksonville, FL 32217
904-256-5030
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See ad on page 4

ILLINOIS

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www.anconaschool.org
Primary - 8th grade
See ad on page 68

Beacon Academy

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Evanston, IL 60201
224-999-1177
www.beaconacademyil.org
9th - 12th grade
See ad on page 39

Bennett Day School

955 W. Grand Ave.
Chicago, IL 60642
312-236-6388
www.bennettday.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 38

Chiaravalle Montessori School

425 Dempster St.
Evanston, IL 60201
847-864-2190
www.chiaravalle.org
age 16 months - 8th grade
See ad on page 67

Francis W. Parker School

330 W. Webster Ave.
Chicago, IL 60614
773-797-5107
www.fwparker.org
Junior K - 12th grade
See ad on page 52

GEMS World

Academy Chicago
350 E. South Water St.
Chicago, IL 60601
312-809-8941
www.gemschicago.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 16

German International

School Chicago
1726 W. Berteau Ave.
Chicago, IL 60613
773-880-8812
www.germanschoolchicago.com
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 51

Lake Forest Country Day School

145 S. Green Bay Rd.
Lake Forest, IL 60045
847-234-2350
www.lfcds.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 69

Lycée Français de Chicago

1929 W. Wilson Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640
773-665-0066
www.lycee-chicago.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 21

Near North Montessori School

1434 West Division St.
Chicago, IL 60642
773-269-6230
www.nnms.org
age 6 months - 8th grade
See ad on page 15

MARYLAND

Barrie School

13500 Layhill Rd.
Silver Spring, MD 20906
301-576-2800
www.barrie.org
age 3 months - 12th grade
See ad on page 49

The GreenMount School

501 W. 30th St.
Baltimore, MD 21211
410-235-6295
www.greenmountschool.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 54

McLean School

K - 4th grade
Falls Road Campus
11810 Falls Rd.
Potomac, MD 20854
301-635-6710
5th - 12th grade
Lochinver Lane Campus
8224 Lochinver Lane
Potomac, MD 20854
301-299-8277

www.mcleanschool.org
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 53

The Nora School

955 Sligo Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-495-6672
www.nora-school.org
9th - 12th grade
See ad on page 14

Washington Waldorf School

4800 Sangamore Rd.
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-429-6108
www.washingtonwaldorf.org
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& Preschool to 12th grade
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www.simons-rock.edu
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Bay Farm Montessori Academy

145 Loring St.
Duxbury, MA 02332
781-934-7101

www.bfarm.org
age 12 months - 8th grade
See ad on page 28

The Cambridge School of Weston

45 Georgian Rd.
Weston, MA 02493
781-642-8600
www.csw.org
9th - 12th grade, day and boarding school
See ad on page 50

Charles River School

6 Old Meadow Rd.
Dover, MA 02030
508-785-0068
www.charlesriverschool.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 38

The Chestnut Hill School

428 Hammond St.
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
617-566-4394
www.tchs.org
age 3 - 8th grade
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continued on page 20



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www.twinparks.org

Independent Schools
continued from page 18

Dedham Country Day School

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Dedham, MA 02026
781-329-0850
www.dedhamcountryday.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 31

German International School Boston

Upper Campus
57 Holton St.
Boston, MA 02134
617-783-2600
Lower Campus
387 Western Ave.
Boston, MA 02135
617-779-7393
www.gisbos.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 44

Hands-On Montessori School

12 Creeden St.
Mansfield, MA 02048
508-339-HOMS (4667)
www.homontessori.com
age 18 months - 6th grade
See ad on page 35

Inly School

46 Watch Hill Dr.
Scituate, MA 02066
781-545-5544
www.inlyschool.org

Toddler - 8th grade
See ad on page 28

Lexington Montessori School

130 Pleasant St.
Lexington, MA 02421
781-862-8571
www.lexmontessori.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 74

Tenacre Country Day School

78 Benvenue St.
Wellesley, MA 02482
781-235-2282
www.tenacrecds.org
Pre-K - 6th grade
See ad on page 57

Wellan Montessori School

80 Crescent Ave.
Newton Centre, MA 02459
617-969-4488
www.wellan.org
Toddler - 8th grade
See ad on page 30

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Dublin School

18 Lehmann Way
Dublin, NH 03444
603-563-8584
www.dublinschool.org
9th - 12th grade, day and boarding school
See ad on page 55

NEW JERSEY



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Lower/Middle School
10 Tower Hill Rd.
Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046
High School
25 Changebridge Rd.
Montville, NJ 07045
973-334-1234
www.craigsschool.org
2nd - 12th grade, for students who learn differently.
See ad on page 33

Dwight-Engelwood School

315 East Palisade Ave.
Englewood, NJ 07631
201-227-3102
www.d.e.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 76

The Elisabeth Morrow School

435 Lydecker St.
Englewood, NJ 07631
201-568-5566
www.elisabethmorrow.org
age 2 - 8th grade
See ad on page 60

Montclair Cooperative School

65 Chestnut St.
Montclair, NJ 07044
973-783-4955
www.montclaircoop.org

Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 13

Moorestown Friends School

110 E. Main St.
Moorestown, NJ 08057
856-914-4426
www.mfriends.org
age 3 - 12th grade
See ad on page 17

Westfield Friends School

2201 Riverton Rd.
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077
856-829-0895
www.westfieldfriends.org
Preschool 2 - 8th grade
See ad on page 44

Winston Preparatory School

901 Route 10 East
Whippany, NJ 07981
973-500-6480
www.winstonprep.edu
4th - 12th grade, for students with learning differences
See ad on page 48

NEW YORK

AVENUES: The World School

259 10th Ave.
New York, NY 10001
212-524-9000
www.avenues.org
age 1 - 12th grade
See ad on page 2

Bank Street School for Children

610 W. 112th St.
New York, NY 10025
212-875-4433
school.bankstreet.edu
Nursery - 8th grade
See ad on page 11

Beit Rabban Day School

Preschool & Elementary
15 W. 86th St.
New York, NY 10024
Middle School
176 W. 105th St.
New York, NY 10025
212-595-1386
www.beitrabban.org
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 38

Blue Rock School

110 Demarest Mill Rd.
West Nyack, NY 10994
845-535-3353
www.bluerockschool.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 40

The Brick Church School

62 E. 92nd St.
New York, NY 10128
212-289-5683
www.brickchurchschool.org
ages 2 - 6 yrs.
See ad on page 31

Brooklyn Heights Synagogue Preschool

131 Remsen St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-522-2070 x131
www.bhsbrooklyn.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 29

Central Park Montessori School

1 W. 91st St.
New York, NY 10024
212-595-2000
www.twinparks.org
ages 3 months - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 19

The Chapin School

100 East End Ave.
New York, NY 10028
212-744-2335
www.chapin.edu
K - 12th grade, girls school
See ad on page 47

City and Country School

146 W. 13th St.
New York, NY 10011
212-242-7802
www.cityandcountry.org
age 2 - 8th grade
See ad on page 10

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212-741-2800
www.corlearsschool.org
Preschool - 4th grade
See ad on page 56

The Dalton School
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53 E. 91st St.
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4th - Dalton E. & PE Center
200 E. 87th St.
New York, NY 10128
4th - 12th grade

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New York, NY 10128
212-423-5200
www.dalton.org
See ad on page 16

The École
Main Campus
111 E. 22nd St.
New York, NY 10010
646-410-2238
www.theecole.org
Nursery - 8th grade
See ad on page 3

**The First Presbyterian Church
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www.fpcns.org
ages 2 - 5.3 yrs.
See ad on page 22

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145 New St.

Mamaroneck, NY 10543
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Mamaroneck, NY 10543
914-240-0401
www.fasny.org
Nursery - 12th grade
See ad on page 17

Garden School
33-16 79th St.
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
718-335-6363
www.gardenschool.org
Nursery - 12th grade
See ad on page 69

Greene Hill School
39 Adelphi St.
Brooklyn, NY 11205
718-230-3608
www.greenehillschool.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 49

Hackley School
293 Benedict Ave.
Tarrytown, NY 10591
914-366-2642
www.hackleyschool.org
K - 12th grade, day and boarding
school
See ad on page 23

**Hannah Senesh
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342 Smith St.
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K - 8th grade
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continued on page 23



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Independent Schools
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The Hewitt School
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New York, NY 10021
212-288-1919
www.hewittschool.org
K - 12th grade, girls school
See ad on page 63

The IDEAL School of Manhattan
5 Hanover Square
New York, NY 10004
212-769-1699
www.theidealschool.org
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 5

The International Preschools
345 E. 86th St.
New York, NY 10028
212-371-8604
www.ipsnyc.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 20

The Kew-Forest School
119-17 Union Turnpike
Forest Hills, NY 11375
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www.kewforest.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 53

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212-977-7777
www.thelangschoo.org
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 34

Lyceum Kennedy French American School
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New York, NY 10017
212-681-1877
www.lyceumkennedy.org
Nursery - 12th grade
See ad on page 47



Mary McDowell Friends School
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Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-625-3939
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718-625-3939
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See ad on page 12

The Masters School
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www.mastersny.org
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See ad on page 24

Montclare Children's School
747 Amsterdam, Ave.
New York, NY 10025
212-865-4020
www.montclareschool.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 31

Nord Anglia International School New York
44 E. 2nd St.
New York, NY 10003
212-600-2010
www.naisny.com
ages 2 - 14 yrs.
See ad on page 56

The Packer Collegiate Institute
170 Joralemon St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-250-0200
www.packer.edu
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 8

Park West Montessori School
435 Central Park West
New York, NY 10025
www.twinparks.org
ages 3 months - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 19

The Play Group Theater
One North Broadway
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www.playgroup.org
age 4 - teen, theatre for children and teens
See ad on page 36

Plymouth Church School
75 Hicks St.
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718-624-9385
www.plymouthchurchschool.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 44

Poly Prep
Lower School
Park Slope Campus
50 Prospect Park West
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www.pustebumenyc.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 66

Riverside Montessori School
202 Riverside Dr.
New York, NY 10025
www.twinparks.org
ages 3 months - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 19

Ross School
18 Goodfriend Dr.
East Hampton, NY 11937
637-907-5400
www.ross.org
Nursery - 12th grade, day and boarding school
See ad on page 71



Rye Country Day School
Cedar St.
Rye, NY 10580
914-925-4513
www.ryecountryday.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 15

Saint Ann's School
129 Pierrepont St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-522-1660
www.saintannsnyc.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 54

St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School
619 W. 11th St.
New York, NY 10025
212-932-1980
www.sthildas.org
Nursery - 8th grade
See ad on page 66

Village Community School
272 W. 10th St.
New York, NY 10014
212-691-5146
www.vcsnyc.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 38

West Side Montessori School
309 W. 92nd St.
New York, NY 10025
212-662-8000
www.wsmsnyc.org

ages 2 - 6 yrs.
See ad on page 47

The Williamsburg Neighborhood Nursery School
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ages 2 - 4 yrs.
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See ad on page 48

York Prep
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www.yorkprep.org
6th - 12th grade
See ad on page 14

PENNSYLVANIA

Benchmark School
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www.benchmarkschool.org
1st - 8th grade, for students with learning differences.
See ad on page 33

Buckingham Friends School
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215-794-7491
www.bfs.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 68

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www.centerschoolpa.org
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www.crefeld.org
7th - 12th grade
See ad on page 44

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www.dvfriends.org
1st - 12th grade
See ad on page 32

Falk Lab School at the University of Pittsburgh
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www.falkschool.pitt.edu
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See ad on page 41

Friends' Central School
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www.friendscentral.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 10

Friends School Haverford
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Haverford, PA 19041
610-642-2334
www.friendschoolhaverford.org
Nursery - 5th grade

See ad on page 70

George School
1690 Newtown-Langhorne Rd.
Newtown, PA 18940
215-579-6500
www.georgeschool.org
9th - 12th grade, day and boarding school
See ad on page 65



Germantown Academy
340 Morris Rd.
Fort Washington, PA 19034
267-405-7070
www.germantownacademy.net
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 48

Germantown Friends School
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31 W. Coulter St.
Philadelphia, PA 19144
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The Curtis Center
601 Walnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19106
215-951-2345
www.germantownfriends.org
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 72

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215-699-5392
www.gwyneddfriendsschool.org
ages 2 - 6 yrs.
See ad on page 30

The Haverford School
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www.haverford.org
Pre-K - 12th grade, boys school
See ad on page 35

Lansdowne Friends School
110 N. Lansdowne Ave.
Lansdowne, PA 19050
610-623-2548
www.lansdownefriendsschool.org
Pre-K - 6th grade
See ad on page 67

Media-Providence School
125 W. 3rd St.
Media, PA 19063
610-565-1960
www.mps.org
age 3 - 8th grade
See ad on page 16



The Miquon School
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Conshohocken, PA 19428
610-828-1231
www.miquon.org/program
Nursery - 6th grade
See ad on page 12

Newtown Friends School
1450 Newtown-Langhorne Rd.
Newtown, PA 18940
215-968-2225
www.newtownfriends.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 46

The Philadelphia School
2501 Lombard St.
Philadelphia, PA 19146
215-545-5323
www.tpschool.org
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 50

Plymouth Meeting Friends School
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Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
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www.pmfis1780.org
age 3 - 6th grade
See ad on page 57

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www.wcfriends.org
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continued from page 25

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Four Steps to Selecting the Right NYC Private School for LGBTQ+ Families

By Dr. Frank Patti

As a gay parent and the head of a New York City private school, I understand the unique challenges LGBTQ+ families face when selecting a private school. Having recently navigated the admissions process for my own daughters, I realize just how different the experience can be for LGBTQ+ parents. The right environment can significantly impact your child's educational experience and overall well-being.

Here's a guide to help you make an informed decision.

Understand What Each School Means by "Inclusive"

An inclusive school embraces students from all backgrounds, ensuring every child feels seen, respected, and valued. For LGBTQ+ families, this means a school where diverse family structures are celebrated, not merely tolerated.

A truly inclusive school will visibly commit to diversity. Look for diverse staff and student representation, comprehensive anti-bullying policies, and a curriculum reflecting various perspectives and histories, including LGBTQ+ contributions.

Start Your Research Here

Begin your search online. Most schools have detailed websites showcasing their values, policies, and community initiatives. Look for strong statements on diversity and inclusion, and check for partnerships with LGBTQ+ organizations or participation in events like Pride Month.



The author, Dr. Frank Patti (right) and his husband, TJ with their daughters and labrador retriever.

Explore reviews and testimonials from other parents. Schools genuinely committed to inclusivity will have positive feedback from diverse families. Remember, real inclusivity goes *continued on page 35*

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Selecting the Right NYC Private School
continued from page 32

beyond marketing.

Ask the Right Questions

Nothing beats a firsthand look. Schedule tours and observe the school environment closely. Pay attention to interactions between students and staff. Diversity should be a lived experience, not just a policy. Positive interactions and a welcoming atmosphere are good indicators of a supportive environment.

Here are key questions to ask:

- How does the school address and support LGBTQ+ issues?
- What specific policies promote diversity and prevent discrimination?
- How diverse is the staff and student body?
- How does the curriculum incorporate and celebrate different family structures?
- What affinity groups are available for LGBTQ+ students and parents?

Pick What's Right for You:

The Final Decision

After gathering all this information, weigh the pros and cons. Reflect on each school's alignment with your family's values and needs. Trust your instincts—choose the school where your child will feel happy, safe, and empowered to be themselves.

Remember, the right school will not only educate but also nurture your child, providing a foundation for their future success. Selecting the right NYC private school for your LGBTQ+ family is a journey worth taking. The right fit will offer an environment where your child can thrive academically and socially, surrounded by acceptance and support.

Take your time, do thorough research, and trust your gut. The perfect school for your family is out there, ready to welcome you with open arms. ▼

Dr. Frank Patti is the principal of City and Country School in NYC's West Village. A recognized private school educator and leader, Frank has more than 20 years of experience in a variety of private school settings. He and his husband, TJ, live in downtown Manhattan with their two young daughters and Labrador retriever. Visit www.cityandcountry.org

Photo courtesy of Julie Clardy



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Freedom in Play: Why Children Should Participate in Extracurricular Activities

By Jeanne Huybrechts, Chief Academic Officer – Stratford School

The old adage “all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” still holds true even today. Playtime and extracurricular activities help contribute to a child’s overall development.

If we want to raise successful children, it’s important to acknowledge that learning isn’t something that only takes place within the four walls of a classroom. A tremendous amount of learning also happens outside of a classroom setting.

According to Jeanne Huybrechts, Stratford School’s Chief Academic Officer, the most tangible benefits of getting your child involved in extracurricular activities include teamwork, a sense of belonging, and early skill development that results in cognitive imprinting and muscle memory.

Undertaking extracurricular activities has far-ranging benefits that touch on many aspects of a child’s development. Here are five advantages of extracurricular activities, demonstrating why you should encourage your child to take on something away from the classroom.

Learn new skills - One of the fundamental benefits of extracurricular activities is that they allow your child to learn



something that could stay with them for a lifetime. Directly, that skill could be the basis of a hobby or passion that enriches their life for many years. Everything from playing sports to learning an instrument

could lead to hours spent doing something they truly enjoy.

Understand a routine - Extracurricular activity involve structure and a predictable series of events that help children get on a schedule. The more they get comfortable sticking to a routine, the easier it gets for them to adhere to a schedule of activities both at home and school. And because their expectations are set, *continued on page 38*

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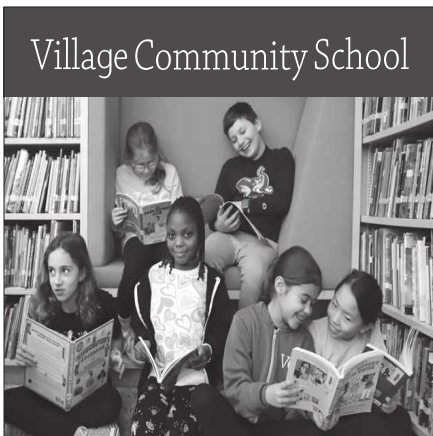
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Why Children Should Participate in Extracurricular Activities continued from page 36

anxieties and stress in children are reduced.

Boost academic performance

- Education requires solid problem-solving skills, memory, creativity, and critical thinking. To varying degrees, you can find an extracurricular activity that has an impact on these areas. Research has been carried out that develops a link between extracurricular participation and better academic performance. In one such study, important academic outcomes like reading, math achievement, and course grades were all found to be positively influenced by children who engage in extracurricular activities.

Broader social skills

- The very nature of many extracurricular activities means that your child will be engaging with other children in a social setting. Away from the classroom, it's a good opportunity for them to mix with likeminded children in something they all enjoy. This is another key benefit of extracurricular activities: they give children a chance to develop their social skills, meet new friends, and become more confident communicating in groups.

Well-rounded individual

- Well-rounded children are known to thrive better in life. These are the ones who grow up with more confidence, sense of independence, creativity, and ability to collaborate with others with fewer conflicts and behavioral issues. They are also the children who tend to adapt to change easily and handle life's challenges more effectively.

To help children receive the most benefits from extracurricular activity involvement physically, emotionally, and socially, Huybrechts recommends they participate in the right amount of activity for their age level and abilities: "Exposure is key as it is impossible to predict what children will enjoy and be able to do well so allow kids to try several activities. Insist on completing whatever the original agreement was – a season, a semester, etc. – and then allow them to step



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Why Children Should Participate in Extracurricular Activities continued from page 38

away if it's not what they like. At the same time, I think it's fair to expect children to eventually commit to one or more extracurricular activities for an extended period.

In addition, there are parents who may be concerned about their child participating in too many activities outside of school. Diversity in extracurricular activities promotes development as long as the child balances activities with the demands of school and family life. As Huybrechts cites: "Kids have different capacities and activities can be seasonal and consume different amounts of time – so there is no single number. I would aim for a couple and perhaps activities that tap into different capabilities and teach different skills: a soccer team and an after-school "coding" club; violin lessons, a school or community orchestra, or a swim team. The combinations I mention would not be taxing to children (or the parents that drive them to practice and rehearsals) and both include physical activity and a genuine team or ensemble experience."

Schools and local communities are full of exciting activities that could spark your child's imagination and capture their attention. Try to read your child's general interests and consider what they may or may not be interested in taking part in. Then, look to their school or the wider community to find an appropriate club for your child. As Huybrechts concludes: "When your child enjoys the activity on a regular basis, looks forward to continued participation, and sees the activity as part of their identity, you can be reasonably assured that the activity is a success."

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Decoding Project 2025 and Its Implications for LGBTQ+ Rights

By Angela D. Giampolo, Giampolo Law Group

Understanding Project 2025

Project 2025, spearheaded by the Heritage Foundation, represents a significant push toward conservative governance that seeks to overhaul federal agencies and replace existing personnel with individuals aligned with conservative and alt-right ideologies. This plan not only aims to shift the balance of power back to the president but also threatens to dismantle many of the protections and recognitions that LGBTQ+ individuals have fought for over the past few decades.

Threats to LGBTQ+ Rights:

- Redefinition of Sex Under Title IX

One of the most alarming aspects of Project 2025 is its intention to redefine sex under Title IX to mean strictly biological sex assigned at birth. This change would strip away protections for transgender and non-binary individuals, making it nearly impossible for the government to recognize their identities legally. Such a redefinition would affect everything from healthcare access to protections against workplace discrimination.

- Department of Justice (DOJ) and Religious Freedoms

Project 2025 advocates for prioritizing religious freedoms over anti-discrimination measures. This stance would allow businesses and individuals to deny services to LGBTQ+ people under the guise of protecting religious liberty. Such policies would foster an environment where discrimination becomes legally permissible and more widespread.

- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Overhaul

The proposed changes to HHS include rolling back protections for transgender individuals in healthcare settings and removing inclusive healthcare poli-

cies. This would deter LGBTQ+ individuals from seeking necessary medical care due to fear of discrimination, exacerbating existing health disparities.

- Educational Reforms

Project 2025 seeks to eliminate LGBTQ+ inclusive language from educational materials and policies. This would create a less supportive environment for LGBTQ+ students, who already face high rates of bullying and discrimination. The removal of protections under Title IX would further marginalize these students, denying them the opportunity to fully participate in their educational experience.

- Promotion of Traditional Family Structures

By emphasizing a traditional nuclear family model, Project 2025 aims to invalidate and marginalize LGBTQ+ families. This would undermine the legal and social recognition of same-sex marriages and parenting, stripping away many of the hard-won rights and protections that LGBTQ+ families currently enjoy.

Protecting Yourself: Steps LGBTQ+ Individuals Can Take

Given the potential threats posed by Project 2025, it is crucial for LGBTQ+ individuals to take proactive steps to safeguard their *continued on page 45*



The author, Angela Giampolo

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Project 2025 continued from page 43

rights and well-being. Here are five key actions you can take:

- Estate Planning

Ensure your legal documents reflect your wishes and protect your rights. This includes creating or updating your will, establishing a power of attorney, and setting up advance directives for healthcare. These measures can help ensure that your partner and family are respected and your wishes are honored, even if legal definitions of family change.

- Adoption

If you are planning to adopt, it may be wise to start the process sooner rather than later. Adoption laws and rights for LGBTQ+ individuals could be affected by changes in federal policy. By securing legal parenthood now, you can better protect your family against future legal challenges.

- Gender-Marker and Name Changes

Transgender and non-binary individuals

should consider updating their legal documents to reflect their gender identity. This includes changing the gender marker and name on identification documents such as driver's licenses, passports, and birth certificates. These updates can provide crucial protections and help ensure your gender identity is legally recognized.

- Legal Protections in Healthcare

Advocate for and utilize legal protections in healthcare settings. Familiarize yourself with your rights under current healthcare laws, and seek out LGBTQ+-friendly healthcare providers. Consider documenting your healthcare preferences and ensuring your medical records accurately reflect your gender identity and chosen name.

- Support LGBTQ+ Organizations

Support organizations that advocate for LGBTQ+ rights through donations, volunteering, or active participation. Groups like the Human Rights Campaign, Lambda Legal, and local LGBTQ+ centers are on the front lines, fighting to protect and

advance LGBTQ+ rights. Your support can make a significant difference in their ability to counteract regressive policies.

Conclusion

Project 2025 represents a significant threat to the progress made in LGBTQ+ rights over the past few decades. By understanding these threats and taking proactive steps to protect yourself and your loved ones, you can help safeguard the hard-won rights and protections that are now at risk. Stay informed, support advocacy organizations, and take practical measures to ensure your legal and personal well-being in the face of potential changes. Together, we can work towards a future where everyone is afforded dignity, respect, and equal rights, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. ▼

For more information visit Giampolo Law Group, www.lawyer.lgbt

Photo courtesy of Angela D. Giampolo



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Hurricane survivor forced to ‘claw her way out of her worst nightmare’ after falling into flood water

By Tara Pyfrom

A monster hurricane almost killed me, and it's the last one I'll ever experience if I can help it. When you are born and raised with hurricanes that visit every few years, you somehow get used to them. My grandparents saw only one or two major storms in their lifetime. My parents experienced a couple as well. Living in the Bahamas my whole life, I've lived through more than I can count, but I remember the names of the big ones: Floyd, Wilma, Frances, Jean, Matthew, and Dorian.

When Hurricane Dorian appeared on the radar, a history of dealing with hurricanes led to robotic preparations for an ordinary storm. We knew to watch the weather forecast carefully and stock up on non-perishable supplies and water a few days before the storm arrived. We've learned over the years what outdoor items need to be secured. We knew to have a radio, tarps, window shutters, sandbags, fuel, and even a generator on hand. Even still, we were completely blindsided when the category 5 hurricane hit our home on Grand Bahama Island in September 2019.

As islanders, we don't run from hurricanes. There's nowhere to run unless you leave the country entirely; with pets, that's not a reasonable option. Hurricane shelters on the island were makeshift at best, mostly older buildings already needing repair, and none allowed animals.

When the 295 km/h wind reached us, it pushed a monumental storm



The author, Tara Pyfrom (right) with her wife Catherine.

surge of up to 7 metres of ocean across the island. Some reports say more than 50% of the island was underwater. We knew some flooding might be possible, but our area was never ordered to evacuate.

In the early morning hours, water reached the doors of our elevated house, and all hell broke loose. We tried desperately to force the sandbags to keep the water out, but they were useless as the ocean rose even higher. We had a metre of water inside within a couple of hours. We sat on our kitchen countertops as the furniture in our house began to float. Terror struck, and tunnel vision took over.

What I feared most of all was being trapped inside our home, my wife, our 6-year-old daughter, and five beloved dogs, all drowning with our heads pressed against the ceiling, gasping for *continued on page 51*



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Hurricane continued from page 49

air. That image in my mind drove us outside in the middle of the worst hurricane ever recorded in the Bahamas.

Hindsight is always 20/20. We could have prepared for a major flood. We could have packed a bug-out bag with food, medicine, and important documents ahead of time. Instead, we sloshed in slow motion around the house in panic, grabbing what we could. We stuffed our cell phones inside Ziploc bags to keep them dry and secured valuables on high shelves. We could have purchased life jackets or even a kayak in our storm prep. Instead, we had a pool float and a semi-buoyant cot mattress.

Outside, we struggled to stay afloat as we huddled against our house. All that mattered was keeping our young daughter and the five animals from being swept away and drowned. Ultimately, that idealistic decision to react to what fear told me was coming proved wrong. After 30 minutes of fighting the waves and wind, we were forced back into our flooded home to avoid drowning then and there.

Back inside the house, rapidly filling like a fishbowl, we struggled with the next steps. As we paused, exhausted from hours of battling with fear and the prospect of death, we tried to work out a better plan to stay alive. The attic was our only remaining option. As I transported the last of our five dogs up the ladder into the attic, the water had risen high enough to cover the doorway to the closet where the attic access was located. I had to dive under the water to move from one room to another.

Even from a place of assumed safety, my idealism guided my de-



Flooding from Hurricane Dorian outside the author's home.

isions. We had no drinking water in the attic and only minimal food. I made a solo trip across the dimly lit attic space to our kitchen, thinking I could stomp a hole in the ceiling to retrieve water from a high cabinet there. Once again, the terror spurring me clouded my brain as I misjudged and fell into the flooded kitchen below. I ended up in the exact position I had been

trying to avoid all along, as the water inside the house had reached two metres and breathing room in the flooded kitchen was minimal.

I didn't stop long enough for the absolute dread to fill me. I grabbed the drinking water and pushed it into the attic. I looked up just in time to see one dog falling into the flood water with me and the second, larger dog hanging precariously. I screamed "No!" at the dog and pushed up with all my might to force her back into the attic. Then I reached for the smaller dog swimming near me and hurled her back into the attic as well.

After retrieving the drinking water and a floating Ziploc containing a set of dry clothes for our daughter, I made my *continued on page 54*

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Hurricane continued from page 51

first attempt at pulling myself back into the attic. Without enough upper body strength, and running dangerously low on mental fortitude, I fell back into the water again, bruising myself as I fell. My fear weighed heavily on me as I realized that I might be stuck until the storm passed, or I drowned, whichever happened first.

With a renewed burst of adrenaline brought on by the fight or flight response, I tried twice more to haul myself out and eventually managed to get my upper body up into the hole. With more twisting, bruises, and scrapes, I managed to claw my way out of my worst nightmare and back into the darkness of the attic.

Unbeknownst to us then, Hurricane Dorian stopped moving and sat over our tiny island. Trapped in the attic, with no contact with the outside world, we were on our own to hold on until the storm passed and rescue could begin. For 24 hours, we sat in inky blackness and waited. We waited for the ocean to rise and drown us in a watery grave above our house. We waited for the wind to rip the roof off at any minute and take us with it.



hurricane force.

Surviving turned out to be step one for us. The aftermath on our island was apocalyptic, with millions of dollars in damage, a lack of utilities, a limited water supply, and looting that began almost immediately. We all made it out alive. Many others did not. The official death



Left photo, Hurricane Dorian floods the author's kitchen. Photo above, inside the author's attic during the hurricane.

toll attributed to Dorian in the Bahamas is 74. Through some miracle, we evacuated within the first 48 hours to the United States.

After several weeks of trying to pick up the pieces, we made the radical decision to give up on the country of our births. What was left of our home was not structurally sound and not repairable. In the haze of trauma, we did not have the strength to face rebuilding our lives at the ocean's edge, *continued on page 56*

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Tara (left) and Catherine now live in Canada.

knowing that another storm would come again to destroy it all.

The frequency and intensity of hurricanes in the Atlantic have increased during my lifetime. More and more people are suffering from catastrophic storms. With that in mind, we chose to trade hurricanes for snowstorms and immigrate permanently to Canada, knowing that snowstorms are far more predictable and far less deadly.

Many of our friends, though less affected by Dorian in most cases, chose to leave the country permanently in the aftermath. We returned to the island 18 months after the storm to find many unrepaired damaged buildings and a new potable water system just coming online. In a country underfunded by government agencies, recovery has been slow, with logistical issues compounded by geography.

In the end, Dorian changed us. The trauma I carry with me now after facing my death and the death of my wife and child will stay with me permanently. Therapy has helped, but I suffer from lingering PTSD symptoms. I've used writing as therapy and poured my pain into a completed memoir.

My hurricane knowledge has been gained by personal experience. Many people worldwide have little to no experiential understanding of hurricanes. Changing weather patterns mean that parts of the world, rarely as affected by these storms as the Bahamas, may just find a monster hurricane on their doorstep one day. ▼

This article was previously published by UNILAD on October 14, 2023. Tara Pyfrom is a Canada-based poet and writer, born and raised as an island girl in the beautiful Bahamas. Pyfrom works as an executive assistant, and when not writing, she can be found plotting her next far-off adventure with her family.

Photos courtesy of Tara Pyfrom

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A Discussion with Suzette Mullen, Author of the memoir *The Only Way Through Is Out*

By Deadra Albrecht-Frasch

Suzette Mullen has a new book that was released on February 13, 2024. Her memoir, titled *The Only Way Through Is Out*, published by the University of Wisconsin Press, chronicles her journey of self-discovery that ultimately leads to her “coming out” later in life. Suzette is also a book coach, specifically focused now on helping LGBTQ+ memoir writers write their stories.

The University of Wisconsin Press website synopsis describes Suzette’s book as “Introspective, bittersweet, and empowering, her memoir is both a coming-out and coming-of-age story, as well as a call to action for anyone who is longing to live authentically but is afraid of the cost. Suzette Mullen had been raised to play it safe—and she hated causing others pain. With college and law degrees, a kind and successful husband, two thriving adult sons, and an ocean-view vacation home, she lived a life many people would envy. But beneath the happy facade was a woman who watched her friends walk boldly through their lives and won-

dered what was holding her back from doing the same. Digging into her past, Suzette uncovered a deeply buried truth: she’d been in love with her best friend—a woman—for nearly two decades—and still was. Leaning into these ‘unspeakable’ feelings would put Suzette’s identity, relationships, and life of privilege at risk—but taking this leap might be her only chance to feel fully alive. As Suzette opened herself up to new possibilities, an unexpected visit to a new city helped her discover who she was meant to be.”

Suzette kindly agreed to answer some Gay Parent Magazine (GPM) questions on her new book, her current relationship, and what the future holds. Warning, this interview contains some spoiler alerts on things that happened in the book. Important to note that Suzette was also published in the New York Times “Modern Love” column where she wrote a 100-word tiny love story that would contribute to her memoir. Suzette told GPM, “As a writer, I loved the challenge of condensing a whole sto-



Suzette Mullen, second from right. Her wife Wendy second from left and they are flanked by Suzette's sons.

ry into 100 words and the allure of a potential New York Times byline was too strong to pass up! I was thrilled when my story was accepted, and it certainly helped give me confidence as I worked on my memoir.” *continued on page 62*

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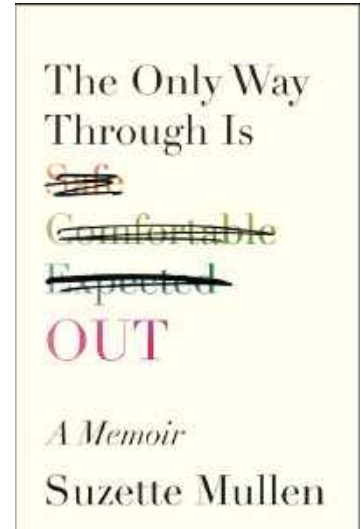
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Suzette Mullen continued from page 59



The Only Way Through Is Out book cover.

GPM: Did you find the process of writing your memoir to be an introspective and healing experience?

Suzette: “For me, and I think this is the case for many memoir writers, I was led to write my story to understand my past and make meaning of it. That act of self-discovery is healing, for sure. As I wrote and examined choices my younger self made, I found more compassion and forgiveness for her, which was also very healing.”

GPM: How and When did you get started with your business? I love that you are now a writing coach and helping LGBTQ+ memoir writers. Is that something that you started after coming out or during?

Suzette: “Before I came out, I was doing some freelance editing and helping high school students discover their deeper stories as they wrote their college application essays. In 2019, I pivoted to book coaching, and in 2022 I went all-in to focus on LGBTQ+ memoir writers. In 2023, I launched Write Yourself Out, a mentorship exclusively for these writers. I love the energy that happens when writers come together in a space where they feel safe and supported.”

GPM: I love that your first kiss with a woman would also be the woman you ended up marrying. Can you tell me more about your relationship with Wendy?... I see you got married in Lancaster in 2021.... Are you still living in Lancaster?

Suzette: “Yes, I’ll be talking more about the journey with Wendy in my next book, but here are some teasers! In “lesbian time,” we took it slow in terms of moving in together and marriage, but after we met, we quickly became a couple. On Valentine’s Day 2021 we proposed

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to each other (!) and planned a small pandemic wedding for that June, which featured, among other things, a stroll through the streets of Lancaster led by a brass band and an anti-LGBTQ+ protestor. Yep, our wedding had a protestor. And yes, I still live in Lancaster. I love this little city, despite the occasional protestor. Sometimes you don't know where you were meant to be until you're there."

GPM: Can you tell me a little about how your relationships with some of the people have changed since writing this?

Suzette: "My relationship with my two sons is as strong as ever, and while my relationship with my ex-husband is obviously different from before, it's friendly and cordial. We don't celebrate holidays together, but we socialize occasionally and check in about our sons from time to time. I'm really proud of how we've found a way to navigate and grow in our new normal."

GPM: I appreciate your honesty in discussing the mental health issues you struggled with during your coming out period. I think it's so important that people don't sugarcoat those lows and aren't afraid to talk about them. So glad you had your Lalas friends during that time. Are you still involved with the Lalas and helping those "new" women during their journeys?

Suzette: "Yes, I agree that it's important that we talk about mental health in the LGBTQ+ community and how supportive community can bolster our mental health. The original Facebook group mentioned in



Suzette Mullen with her sons.

my memoir is no longer in existence, but I have remained close friends with many of the former members. Now I'm in several other later-in-life groups where the same questions I grappled with years ago come up over and over again. I feel so much for the women who are in the early stages of questioning and coming-out, as well as those stuck in the messy middle. I engage as much as I can in those online communities to let these women know that I see them and that there is hope on the other side of the struggle. It is my deep desire that my book will provide hope, encouragement, and inspiration to many readers in the queer community."

GPM: I know in your book you discussed that others saw you as brave but you didn't really see yourself that way. Has that changed for you now? Do you see yourself as brave? I hope so, it takes a lot to put yourself and your story out there for the world.

Suzette: "Sure, I'll claim the brave label now! Now that I'm more than seven years on the other side of coming out, it's easier to see the courage it took to leave behind everything I knew to live a more authentic life. Sharing that story with the world in *The Only Way Through Is Out* certainly adds a layer of vulnerability into the mix."

GPM: Are you still involved with the Lancaster (PA) LGBTQ+ Coalition?

Suzette: "I am still a supporter of the Coalition although I no longer

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serve on their Board. In the last several years, I've expanded my nonprofit advocacy work to include leading writing groups for the Pride and Joy Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to prevent suicide and homelessness in the LGBTQ+ community. I also currently serve as a committee member for the LGBTQ+ Giving Circle, which provides grants to community organizations working to raise visibility and address the needs of LGBTQ+ communities within Lancaster County, Pennsylvania."

GPM: Any plans for a follow-up book? ...Also – I can totally see this being made into a movie; hope that happens one day!

Suzette: "Yes, I've begun to plan my next book, tentatively titled 'After the Leap'. It will explore how I learned to hold the competing emotions of joy and grief together as I stepped into a new life and let go of the old life. And oh my goodness, a movie! That would be fantastic! I already know who I want to play me— Laura Linney, are you listening?!"

GPM: Anything else you'd like to share with our readers? I see you have an upcoming book tour – are you excited about that?

Suzette: "I am so excited about my book launch in Lancaster and my bookstore events in



Wendy (left) and Suzette and pet.

Houston, Washington State (Seattle, Olympia, Bellingham), and Philadelphia! We're continuing to schedule events—we just recently added one in Doylestown PA.... The other piece of exciting news is that we're working on an audiobook version of my memoir. We've chosen a narrator who is recording the book now. It's wild to hear someone else reading my words! The audiobook will be available this summer. To close, I feel privileged to be living my best life now and to have a book out in the world to share the message that authenticity is worth the cost. That it's never too late to live out loud,

and it's never too late for a new beginning."

For more information on Suzette Mullen, her book or business, readers can visit Suzette's website <http://www.yourstoryfinder.com>, where those interested can order her book, sign up for her coaching services or mentorship program, see upcoming events, and more. For publicity requests Suzette can be reached through her publicist Angelle Barbazon at <https://booksforward.com>. Suzette can also be followed on her social media: Facebook

@Suzette-Mullen-Author, or on Instagram @urstoryfinder. ▼

Deadra Albrecht-Frasch lives in the Chicagoland area with her wife Alice and twin daughters Shay and Devlin. Deadra has a degree in Psychology from UNC-Charlotte and works in the healthcare field. In her free time she enjoys writing, and playing the piano and trumpet. She has also written a Children's book that delves into child anxiety surrounding moving to a new home. Available for order on Amazon via ebook or paperback, Stretch City: Moving Day <https://amzn.to/3zAQKz>

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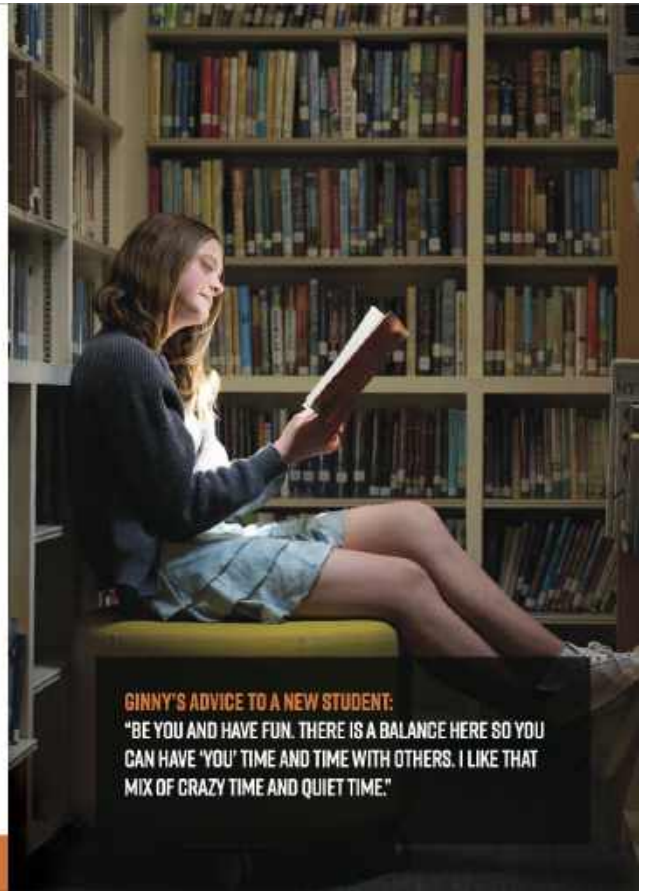
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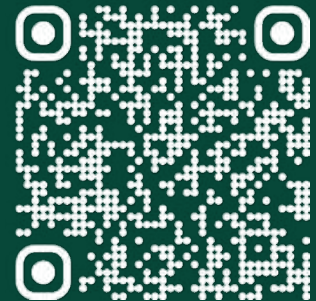
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Catching up with the Bundy Family of Virginia

By Deadra Albrecht-Frasch

In June of 2018, GPM introduced our readers to the Bundy Family of Richmond, Virginia. It's been seven years and they've since had many ups and downs as one would expect, including several changes and accomplishments throughout their family. Needless to say, it was definitely time for a check-in with the Bundy family.

As previously shared in the 2018 article, Kindall and Michelle Bundy met online in November of 2012, and married by the next February. We are happy to report that they are still married and going strong. At the time of the last article, they had two children, a thirteen-year-old named Phillip, and four-year-old named Eryn. They also owned three successful businesses, and were working on grad-

uate degrees. They were also registered as a foster family, though they didn't have any placements at the time. Somehow through all of that, they still managed to have weekly date nights. If you thought, they were busy then, just wait until you read about all that they've accomplished since 2018!

Kindall, is now Dr. Kindall M. Bundy and has written several books which we will cover a little later in more detail. However, when asked about their marital success, Kindall said "Respect, communication, compromise, and consistency are the key to a healthy marriage." In fact, Kindall recently published a book titled "Marital Coaching: In Black &



Michelle (left) and Kindall Bundy

White" which is available on Amazon, and aims to support couples within the LGBTQIA+ *continued on page 70*



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community. Kindall further explained that the book “is based on marital barriers that are not discussed within the LGBTQIA+ community. Additionally, Kindall “officiates weddings in the DMV (DC, Maryland, and Virginia) area [and has] been



Eryn

officiating and offering marital coaching since 2013.”

Michelle and Kindall’s son Phillip, is now 18 years old and actively serving in the Army. He graduated in 2023 with honors, and he is now working



Phillip



Ki'yone

the time, was in search of a forever family, and they happily made him a part of theirs. De'Sean graduated

to advance within his career and attend college. Eryn is now 10 years old and has an interest in becoming a lawyer so she enjoys reading books on law. Kindall reports that Eryn is already reading at a high school level and maintains being on the honor roll.

In 2018, a young man named De'Sean who was 15 at

high school with honors in 2021 and is now actively serving in the Air Force. Kindall said “His goal is to advance in his active-duty status and train for advanced roles. He does intend to attend college after his first duty assignment ends in 2025.”

De'Sean and Phillip are only three years apart in age, while Eryn is nine years younger than Phillip, so Kindall

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explained it's been amazing because "they taught her to maintain the lawn and she has taught them to prepare meals, clean their bedrooms, and clean the kitchen. They are close and consider each other to be brother and sister." Kindall also said that they have "often postponed trips to wait on the vacation time of the two young men. As a family we pride ourselves on teaching our kids the importance of togetherness and thinking of each other as you would want someone to think of you."

Kindall said their parenting has been great, so great that Kindall wrote a book about parenting. The book, also available on amazon, is titled "Parenting Toolkit: Love, Marriage & Business" and aims to "support families in the LGBTQIA+ community overcome obstacles with parenting to include blended families, natural children, and court proceedings.

Kindall and Michelle also still have their three businesses, the first being Paint and Juice (www.ipaintandjuice.com) which offers so many different types of events including things for children, teens, corporate events centered around creativity and painting. According to Mindful Memory Health Solutions website, (www.mmhnetwork.com) they provide "accountability partners that offer non-medical mindful living solutions for individuals with memory loss and dementia symptoms. Participants benefit from personalized care plans and programs designed for mindful living." Surely, this business was inspired by their experiences caring for Michelle's mom; truly inspiring. Pride Empowered, their third business, (www.iamprideempowered.org), describes itself as providing "support, education, and advocacy for LGBTQ+ and local affiliate communities and organizations. Pride Empowered works with diverse organizations along with individual experiences." For more information on any of Kindall and Michelle's businesses, visit the above websites.

At the time of the last article, Michelle was working on completing her Doctoral degree in Business Admin-

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Left to right, Philip, Ki'yone, and De'Sean.

istration, however as expected, this family believes in always putting family first. That's why Kindall explained that when Michelle's mother became ill with Dementia, they didn't hesitate to move her in with them. Kindall said that "parent care is an obstacle we were faced with but working together and putting some planning strategies in place...[allowed] us to overcome a lot." Michelle completed her Masters in Business Administration and has been working with the Department of Defense for three years now. Kindall is still a minister and works "with my community members through Pride Empowered with their spiritual journey, positive social interactions and marital goals."

The last article also discussed the Bundy family possibly expanding their family to include another biological child. Instead, they've added four children since then (three temporarily), and also moved Michelle's mother in. As mentioned previously, the did adopt

De'Sean. Kindall also explained that "During Covid-19, we added a high school senior age 17, Ki'yone to our family. He was located by a community member that informed us of his need for a family to avoid having to leave school. With our love, care, and academic support he graduated in 2020 with honors. He is now working full-time and has his own apartment."

Kindall has also faced some

health issues since we last checked in. Kindall explained that "In December of 2022, I was diagnosed with stomach cancer. In April of 2023, I had surgery and have been in good health since." Not even cancer could



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not get enough attention in our foster system today.

In addition to some of the aforementioned books and topics, Kindall also wrote and illustrated a children’s book titled “Blended Hearts” in 2022. Perhaps one of the most unique features of this book is that the children in the book do not have faces; something that is explained as being so that any child that reads the book can see themselves in the story. Such an amazing concept and so inspiring. For more information on Dr. Kindall M. Bundy, and any and all of the available 16 books published, visit www.amazon.com/author/drkmbundy.

The world continues to see great things from all of the Bundy family, and there’s no question that the next time GPM follows up with the Bundy’s, they are sure to be doing even more exciting and inspiring things for our LGBTQIA+ community and beyond. ▼

Deadra Albrecht-Frasch lives in the Chicagoland area with her wife Alice and twin daughters Shay and Devlin. Deadra has a degree in Psychology from UNC-Charlotte and works in the healthcare field. In her free time she enjoys writing, and playing the piano and trumpet. She has also written a Children’s book that delves into child anxiety surrounding moving to a new home. Available for order on Amazon via ebook or paperback, Stretch City: Moving Day, <https://amzn.to/3zAOQKz>

Photos courtesy of Kindall Bundy

The Bundy family in 2018. Philip holding a copy of Gay Parent Magazine with the Bundy family on the cover (left). Michelle and Kindall (middle and right) with Eryn (front).

stop Kindall and the entire Bundy family from moving forward. Kindall said that “from 2022 to 2024, I have written and published 16 books. My books support my community with mental and physical health strategies needed for success with everyday living. My credentials have expanded to include a Doctorate in business, certified dementia practitioner, qualified mental health professional, and a certified wellness coach. Each of which qualify my expertise for my publications.” Amazing accomplishments especially in such a short time, a testament no doubt to what a supportive and loving family they all are for each other.

There is definitely something for everyone in any one of Kindall’s books. Topics include but are not limited to Marital Coaching, developing healthy habits, saving money, leadership focus and change management, maximizing goals and so much more. There’s even a book titled “The Journey Home” which Kindall not only authored but also illustrated. According to the amazon description, the story is about a boy who goes through four different families looking for his forever home; prompting the reader to see things from the child’s perspective of fostering and adoption. No doubt a necessary topic that definitely does



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Complete Playground

By Gary Hurtubise

There's a new attraction in the south end of Manhattan for the 12-and-under crowd and their families.

Billed by the New York Post as “a non-profit inclusive family center that aims to combine play, education and skill building for children across the learning and neuro-development spectra,” Complete Playground is the brainchild of Alex Reznik: celebrity fitness mogul, husband, and father of three boys.

Alex was born in 1968 in the ex-Soviet republic of Azerbaijan – his mother's homeland – but spend most of his youth in Ukraine (at the time, also part of the Soviet Union), in a small city called Nikolayev, close to the Black Sea port of Odessa.

His father was an engineer and his mother a doctor; but rather than follow in either of their steps, Alex would choose his own path.



Alex Reznik (back right) and husband Eugene with their children, left to right, Lucas, Nikolas, and Milan. They are standing on the premises of the Complete Playground in New York City.



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Serving his mandatory conscription in the Soviet army, Alex then went to study at the Saint Petersburg State University of Technology and Design.

It was around this time that something unimaginable was happening. Political winds of change were blowing across the Eurasian steppes – winds that would culminate with the fall of the Soviet Union at the end of December 1991, and with the rise of democracy in the fifteen ex-communist republics of the region.

Freedoms that had not been enjoyed in three generations were now in reach for the 290 million citizens of this new world. Freedom of speech, political dissent, labor unions, private corporations... and freedom of movement – all were now more than just an unthinkable dream.

Alex took advantage of this last freedom, making one of the most sig-

nificant decisions of his life. “After a few years (at university), I decided to immigrate to America,” he states, simply.

Alex's sister also chose to leave the family's homeland, moving to Israel along with Alex's parents – where they still reside today. His sister is the mother of two and a grandmother of three.

As a teenager, Alex knew he was gay, but coming out during the Soviet era was a dangerous proposition: subject to incarceration or being committed to a mental institution.

Beginning during Mikhail Gorbachev's presidency, and extending beyond the fall of the Soviet Union, a gay & lesbian movement arose in the region, pushing back on generations of discrimination and abuse.

The LGBTQ+ community in the ex-Soviet republics continued to gain

rights for about a decade, until Vladimir Putin rose to power.

Starting around 2000, Putin's regime – along with the Russian Orthodox Church – began to promote 'traditional Russian values' and today, classifies LGBTQ+ movements as extremist organizations. The Ukrainian government has also resisted recognizing rights for their LGBTQ+ population – only recently beginning to 'study' the possibility of same-sex unions, though this has been put on indefinite hold while the Russian invasion of that country continues.

Leaving all that behind, Alex settled in New York City, where he worked to carve out his own American Dream. "After I moved to America, I met some gay people," Alex recalls. "I realized nothing was wrong with being gay."



The family in Vienna, Austria. Alex Reznik (back right) and husband Eugene with their children, left to right, Nikolas, Milan, and Lucas.

Alex recalls, when he came out to them. Even after introducing them to his serious boyfriend, Eugene, they were slow to come around.

Eventually, though, "they realized that Eugene and I were going to be a family and have kids," and today, have come to accept the couple.

Eugene Tuipich and his brother also grew up in Ukraine – in the Eastern city of Kharkiv. Readers may recognize this city as the site of some of the fiercest battles that have taken place since Russia's invasion of Ukraine starting in 2022. Sadly, portions of Eugene's historic hometown have been destroyed under the constant barrage of Russian attacks.

Eugene attended the Kharkiv State University of Radioelectronics,

The same could not be said regarding his parents' attitude, though. "They were not very happy about it,"



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Shortly after completing his education, Eugene decided to immigrate to America, settling in New York City, where he and Alex would soon meet.

Eugene's parents had no idea their son was gay until he and Alex invited them on a trip to Israel, where they were introduced for the first time to Alex's parents.

Alex describes both himself and Eugene as always "very busy working", and not having had a lot of time to "go out to gay bars and clubs." The couple did manage to find the time to tie the knot, however, getting married on July 1st of 2013, a couple short years after it became legal in New York State.

When asked when Alex first met Eugene, he describes a classic first date: going to the movies. "I asked him on that first date if he wanted to have kids," Alex matter-of-factly recalls. Eugene's reply was equally to the point. "The answer was 'yes'."

"For me, it was very, very important," Alex explains, about including

Left photo, the family posing in front of the White House, Eugene (back left) and Alex with Lucas (left) and Milan. Right photo of the family vacationing at the Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas.

children in his life.

The couple talked about how they would grow their family for a few years, before looking into it seriously, around the time they were married.

Eugene and Alex chose surrogacy as their preferred means of having kids, going through all the required legal processes and being matched with their surrogate and egg donor.

In May of 2015, the two men were blessed with twin boys: Lucas and Milan. Less than two years later, their third son, Nikolas, joined his brothers to round out the family.

All three boys share the same egg donor and surrogate mother. The 'twins' – interestingly enough – are technically *not* twins. Alex is genetically the father to one, while Eugene is father to the other.

Around the time that their third son was born, the couple learned that two-year-old Milan had autism. Immediately, they connected Milan with a

speech therapist and an occupational therapist, who recommended providing their son access to a sensory gym.

By age five, Milan was still non-verbal, and was further diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. It was recommended to Alex that Milan be enrolled in an inclusive classroom – a school environment in which all students – regardless of their skills or abilities – are welcomed and integrated.

"It was a very good decision," Alex reports. "In a few months (of joining the inclusive classroom), Milan started talking."

Alex acknowledges that his son still has challenges, "but he's learned to be very independent."

All three of Eugene and Alex's boys enjoy doing karate and swimming... and *likely* also enjoy spending time at their dad's latest commercial endeavor: Complete Playground, New York City's newest and largest

indoor playground!

Before Complete Playground, though, there was Complete Body: the only privately-owned chain of health clubs in Manhattan.

Alex started Complete Body in 1994. In those early, humble days, Alex worked with clients out of his apartment, gradually shifting the focus to his clients' homes, or to local parks.

Eventually, Complete Body acquired its own real estate, today occupying five sites in-and-around Manhattan, including the former location of Clay Health Club & Spa at 25 W. 14th Street.

Complete Body is a health club for the stars, attracting such Hollywood A-listers as Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson and Keanu Reeves, rapper 50 Cent, CNN's Anderson Cooper, as well as fashion designer Marc Jacobs.

Complete Playground promises to attract a similar clientele – with Anderson Cooper and kids already having visited early in the playground's opening at the start of this year.

Alex's inspiration for Complete Playground was two-fold. On the one hand, he and Eugene have travelled with their boys around the world, and in most cities they visited, they were able to find indoor playgrounds for kids.

Upon return from one particular trip, Alex was very shocked to realize that Manhattan *did not* offer an interior children's play area.

The other source of inspiration for



Celebrating the twins' birthday at Complete Playground. Alex Reznik (back right) and husband Eugene with their children, left to right, Nikolas, Lucas, and Milan.

"I wanted to be near residential areas, schools and subways," he explains. The perfect space would have to be safe, large, with high ceilings – and also affordable.

It turned out this perfect location was right under his nose, in a space adjacent to one of Alex's existing Complete Body locations

"It was the ideal location – close to Battery Park and many schools. It already had elevators, air conditioning, and bathrooms."

When asked about how he imagined the design of the space, Alex replied without hesitation. "Because I've travelled and seen hundreds of playgrounds, I knew exactly what I wanted to do."

With his design in mind, Alex collaborated with iPlayCo – an indoor playground equipment manufacturer out of Vancouver, British Columbia – to finalize the layout and provide the necessary materials.

In his Downtown Alliance article, Alex described his vision for Complete Playground as follows: "it's a versatile center that caters to the needs of all children, including those who require special attention due to their diverse needs."

"We aim to offer a wide range of services, including sensory rooms, sensory gyms, speech services, martial arts, robotics, gymnastics, fine art, early childhood enrichment classes and birthday parties."

"This space is designed to be not just an indoor playground, but also a hub for enrichment and therapeutic programs. Our ultimate goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all children, regardless of their unique requirements, can thrive."

Several months into operation, Alex can report that the lower Manhattan community has responded very positively to the new addition to their neighborhood.

the playground was far more personal.

"When my son Milan was diagnosed as neurodivergent at the age of two, it opened my eyes to the challenges parents face in finding suitable services," Alex is quoted as saying, in a November 2023 article by Downtown Alliance (downtownny.com)

In their search for services for Milan, Eugene and Alex quickly realized that there was an opportunity to fill a much sought-after niche.

"This compelled me to create a space that provided essential services (needed by neuro-atypical children) while also creating a fun and inclusive environment for all children to play together," Alex goes on to say in the same article.

It took Alex quite a few years to find a space for his dream, as his needs were quite specific.



Left to right, Lucas, Eugene, Nikolas, Milan, and Alex.

“We’re extremely busy on the weekends with birthday parties. During the week, we’re focusing mostly on school trips and classes. The most popular area is the ‘open space’, where kids can run and play.”

“The biggest challenge right now is to organize school trips, because it’s a very bureaucratic process.”

Alex is particularly proud of how he’s managed to create a neuro-divergent-friendly space. “We don’t have loud music or an arcade. We do have a special sensory gym and separate sensory room. To kids who need it, we offer special headphones and fidget toys to play with. We offer special classes for kids with sensory needs.”

The playground website also describes personalized ABA (applied behavior analysis), occupational, sensory, and speech therapies for children on the autism spectrum or who have other developmental challenges.

Additionally, on Father’s Day this year, Complete Playground offered its first “Gay Day”, which Alex hopes to repeat as a monthly event.

So, if you find yourself in lower Manhattan with kids in tow, consider visiting Alex’s new 40,000 square foot playground, featuring STEAM-based

play areas, a three-story obstacle course, bouncy castles and tunnels, not to mention programs such as art and music exploration, martial arts, gymnastics, yoga, dance, and more.

For more information about Alex’s fitness centers or indoor playground, visit www.completebody.com or

www.completeplayground.org. If you are interested in supporting the playground, Alex has a GoFundMe page at gofundme.com/f/complete-playground where you can donate or get in touch with your offer of help. ▼

Gary Hurtubise lives in Eastern Ontario with his husband Trevor, their two sons Noah & Meo, and their two yellow labs. Gary attended the Royal Military College of Canada and served in the Royal Canadian Navy before becoming a high school physics teacher, and part time Ghostwriter. Gary finds time to write during those odd moments between life: at 4:30 in the morning, on long road-trips with the kids, while back-country camping, and when he should be doing his share of the chores.

Photos courtesy of Alex Reznik and Uliana Romanchuk

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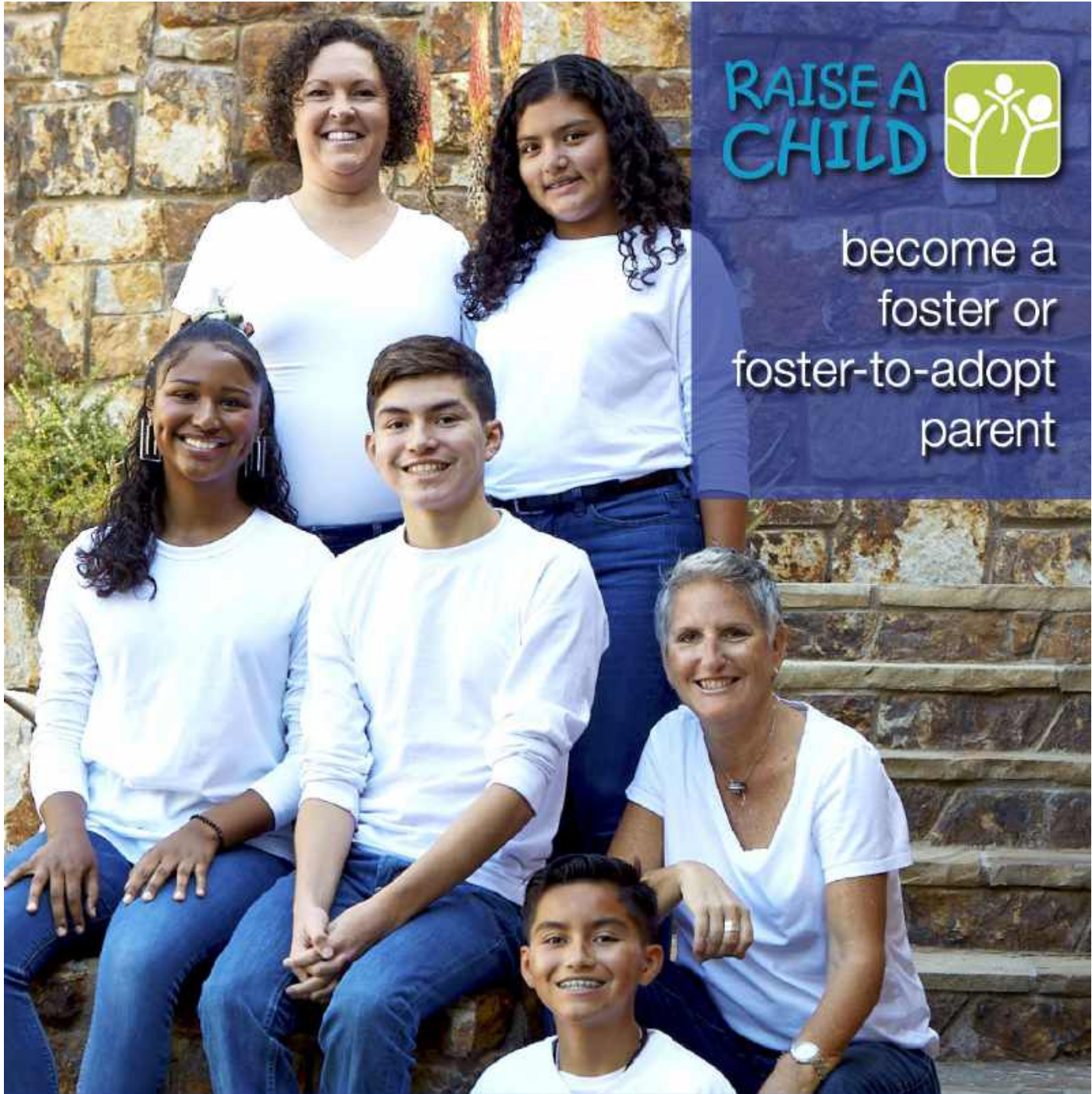
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