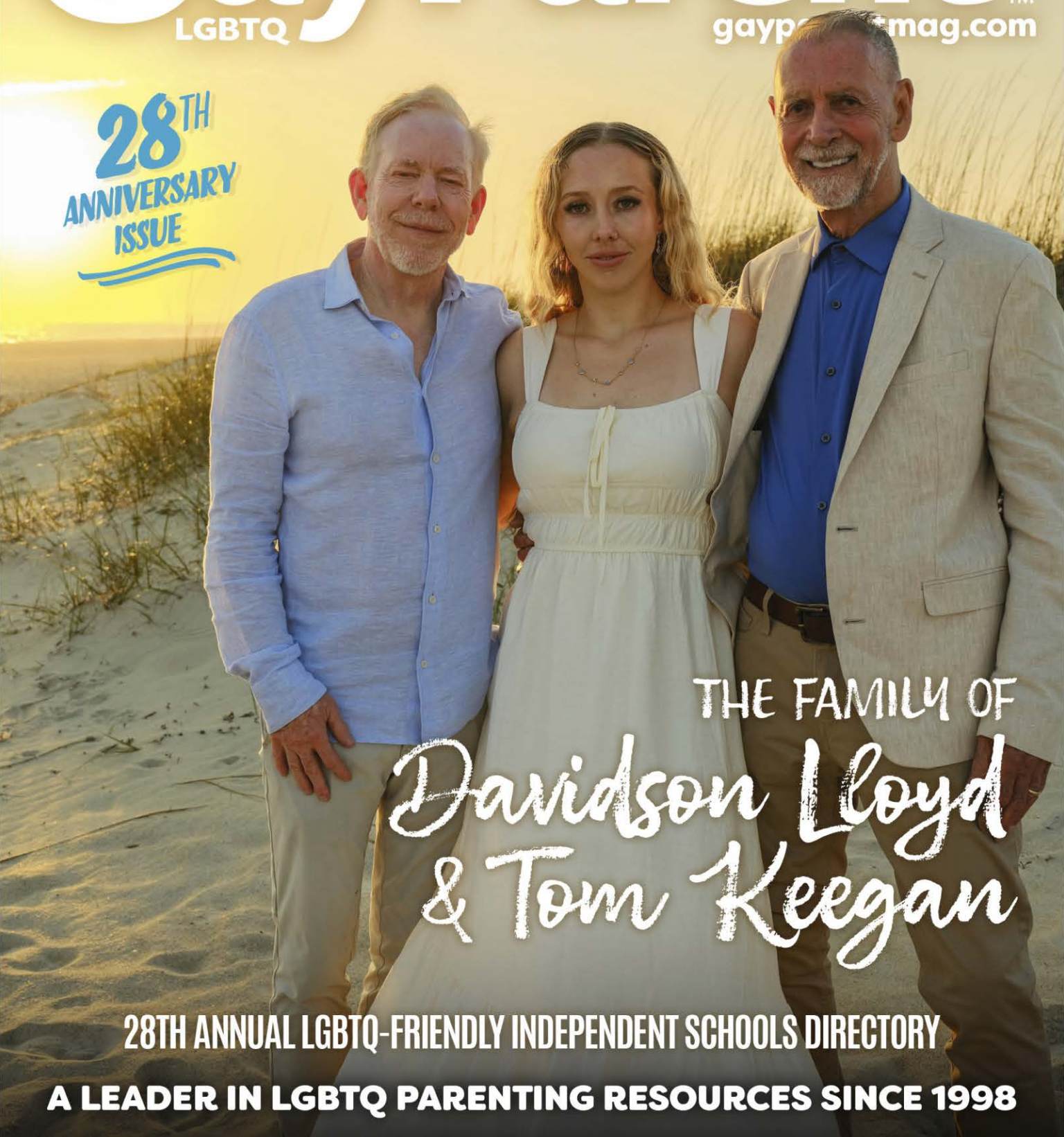
28TH ANNUAL LGBTQ-FRIENDLY ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE DIRECTORY

November-December 2026 | Issue #169

GayParent LGBTQ

gayp[illegible]tmag.com

28TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



THE FAMILY OF Davidson Lloyd & Tom Keegan

28TH ANNUAL LGBTQ-FRIENDLY INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS DIRECTORY

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HOMOLOGATION du ministère français chargé de l'éducation
parents League of new york
NAIS National Association of Independent Schools
FISNA
AFSA ASSOCIATION OF FRENCH SCHOOLS IN NORTH AMERICA

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MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL
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Since 1893 we have been doing what we love – bringing out the very best in children – and we welcome you to join our community!

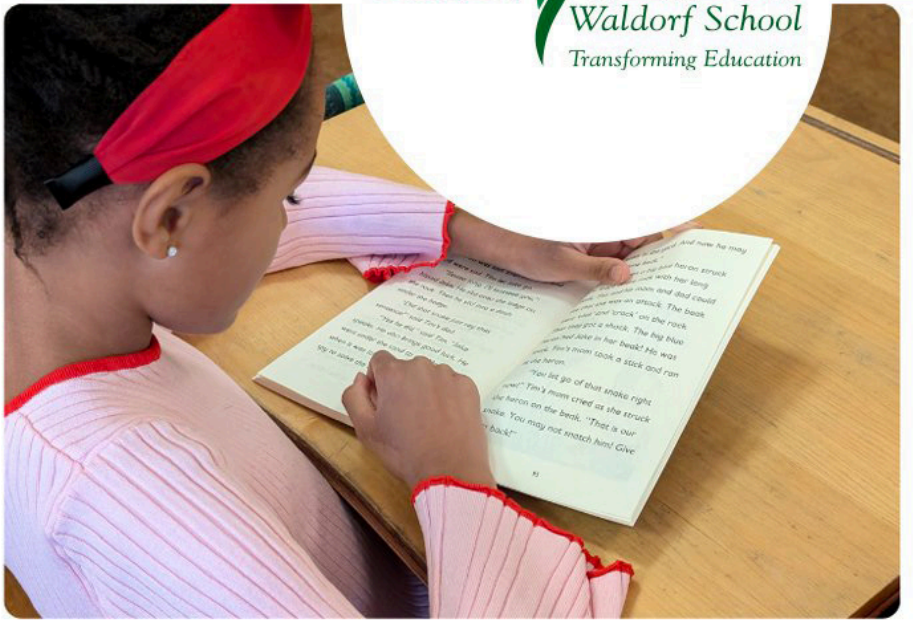
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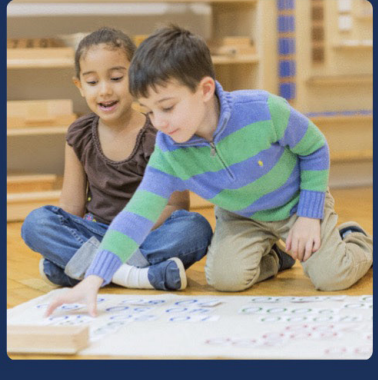


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Discover how you can make a difference at **kidsave.org/GPM**.

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https://pcs-nyc.org/



www.brookwood.edu

Gay Parent LGBTQ MAGAZINE
28th Anniversary November-December 2026 issue #169

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FROM OUR ARCHIVE - Christmas photos from families featured on our pages. - page **13**

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28th Annual Gay Parent Magazine LGBTQ Friendly Independent School Directory - Over 150 schools listed ranging from nursery to college and organized by state. Includes schools for students with learning differences, bilingual schools, all girls or all boys, boarding, and faith-based schools. - page **20**



ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT - Miracle Surrogacy - Founded in 2014 by parents who personally built their family through surrogacy, Miracle Surrogacy is the largest and longest-established surrogacy agency in Mexico. - page **37**

ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT - Bay Farm Montessori Academy, Massachusetts -"The belief in peaceful coexistence is central to Montessori philosophy. Children are encouraged to embrace diversity and understand different perspectives," writes Gráinne Murray, Head of School. - page **42**



ADVERTISER SPOTLIGHT - Garden School, New York City - "We believe every family should feel welcomed, respected, and reflected in the life of the school. At Garden, students are known, supported, and encouraged to be themselves, while families become active members of a close-knit community." - page **47**

Oh Baby - With love in his heart, Stewart Lewis writes about his husband Steve. - page **53**

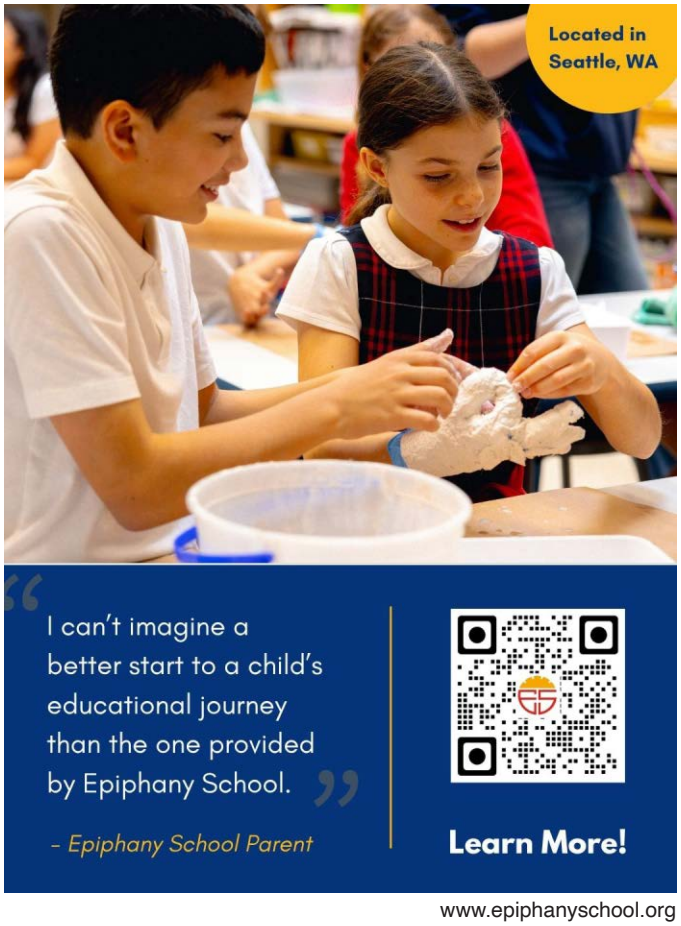
A Baby with two Daddies - During the 1990s, Davidson Lloyd and Tom Keegan adopted their daughter from a birth mother living in Arkansas. This is their story that includes surviving a tornado. - page **58**

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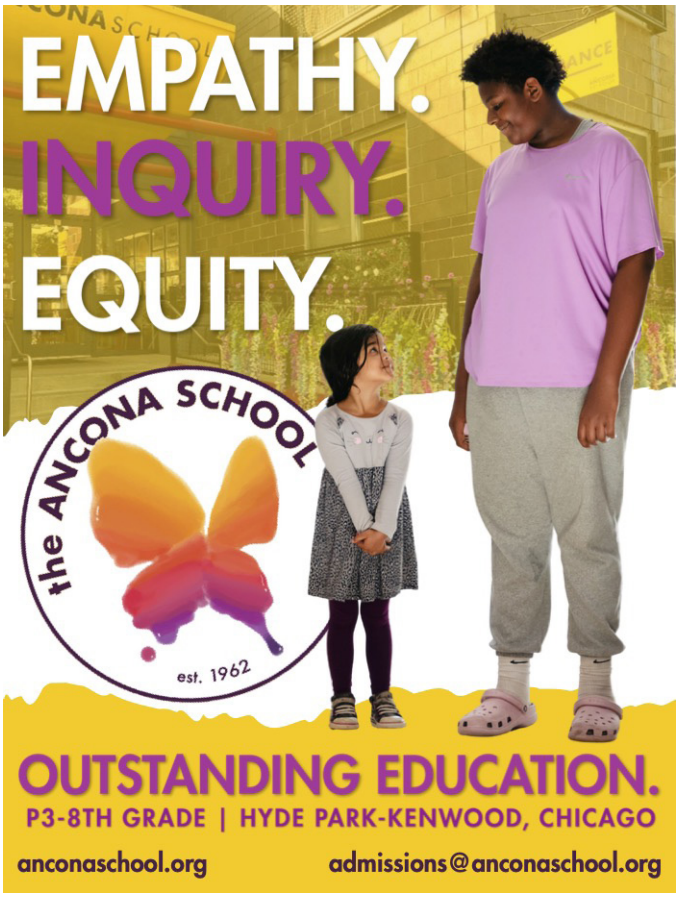


Cover photo courtesy of Davidson Lloyd. Photos this page, top to bottom, photo courtesy Aynisa Leonardo and Suzie Dunn, Nyema Barber, Jameel Mayers, and Stewart Lewis.

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Have a wonderful holiday season, good health, safety, loving family and friends, and world peace

This issue marks the twenty-eighth year of Gay Parent Magazine (GPM) publishing; nearly thirty years has passed since the first issue was published in the fall of 1998. Nearly one hundred and seventy issues have been published (you're reading issue #169).

Since this anniversary issue always falls just before the mid-term elections, I'd like to remind everyone to vote–and to vote for those that support the LGBTQ community. Visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website for information on your 16 – 18 year old age child registering to vote for the primaries and general election: https://bit.ly/4yROKu0. Your vote is important; a coalition of far-right organizations and politicians are working to undermine LGBTQ rights through the United Nations. On UnclosetedMedia.com, read the article, "At the UN, Plans for a Global Coalition to Attack LGBTQ and Reproductive Rights": https://bit.ly/3VHkX8w

LGBTQ people are an integral part of society. According to the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, same gender couples who are parents are about seven times more likely to be raising adopted or foster children than different gender couples:

https://bit.ly/3TG4SPT

In this issue find a directory of LGBTQ friendly adoption and foster care organizations that can assist with building and nurturing your family.

With every end of the year issue, we give thanks to everyone involved in keeping GPM publishing. This includes our audience of readers, subscribers, and social media followers. We extend a huge thank you to our advertisers, especially to our long time advertisers. Recently, an owner of a summer camp—advertising with us since 2015—told us that parents had found their camp from Gay Parent Magazine. The camp owner wrote, "Thanks for continuing to publish."

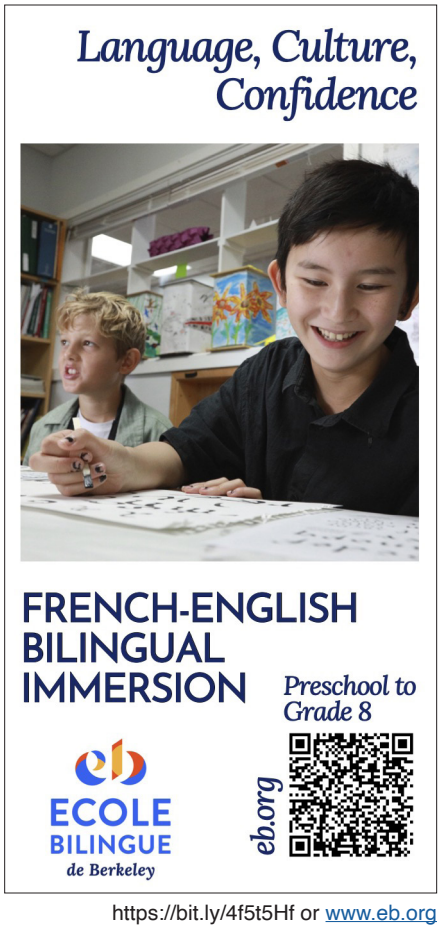
Thank you to our editorial contributors this past year, Gary, Renée, Dane, Ali, Aja, and all the writers who have contributed to GPM. Thank you to GPM's team, Vivian, Ben, Brett, Haven, and Nyema.

Lastly, we'd like to thank all the families that have shared their stories on our pages. Your stories are inspirational, informational, historical, and help in keeping LGBTQ headed families visible. As we head into 2027, GPM will continue to support LGBTQ parents and tell their stories.

Make sure to follow our social media to get current and previous issues. See page 13 for links. For more family resources visit our website.

We wish everyone a wonderful holiday season, good health, safety, loving family and friends, and world peace.

Angeline Acain
Publisher & Editor ▼



https://bit.ly/4f5t5Hf or www.eb.org



www.corlearsschool.org

CHRISTMAS FAMILY PHOTOS FROM OUR ARCHIVE



Above: The family of Madison and Anya Packer were featured in our July-August 2025 issue #161.
Photo courtesy of Jennifer Savage/iHeartMedia.



Left: The family of Nyema and Sondra Barber were featured in our March-April 2026 issue #165.
Photo courtesy of Nyema Barber.



Right: The family of Jameel Mayers and Nicholas were featured in our November-December 2025 issue #163. Read their story on our website: https://bit.ly/4psIjcN. *Photo courtesy of Jameel Mayers.*



Above: The Leonardo Dunn family were featured in our May-June 2024 issue #154.
Photo courtesy of Aynisa Leonardo and Suzie Dunn.

Read available past issues posted on our social media. Follow our new Facebook page, Gay Parent Magazine-original, Instagram, Threads, Tumblr, Bluesky, and X. Send us your family photos, comments, and requests to be featured. Email us at gayparentmag@gmail. ▼

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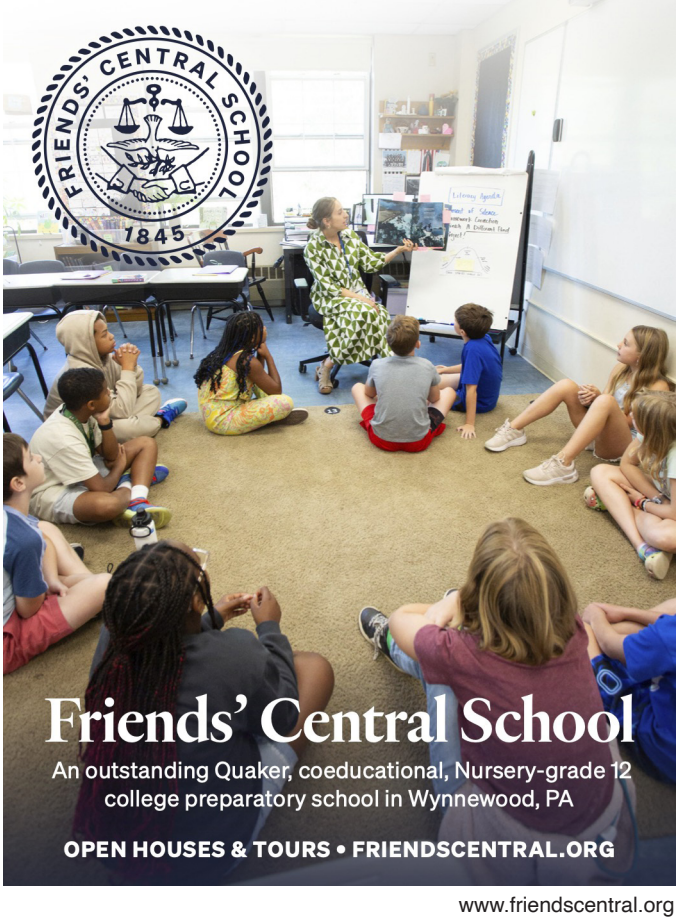
www.prospectsierra.org



www.thehudsonschool.org



https://marymcdowell.org/



www.friendscentral.org



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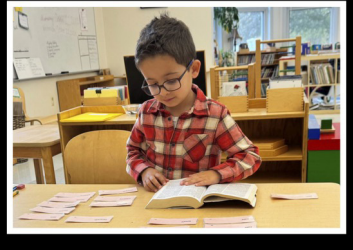
Tenacre Country Day School

Pre-K to Grade 6 • Wellesley



www.tenacrecds.org/explore

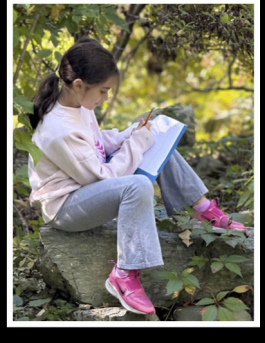
www.tenacrecds.org/explore





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Scan Here for Admission Events

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We hope you will visit *www.chapin.edu* to learn more about Chapin, which educates students in Kindergarten through Class 12 under one roof.

The Chapin School
100 EAST END AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY

www.chapin.edu

Adoption and Foster Care Resources

So you're thinking of building your family through adoption and foster care. Good news is that we have allies who realize LGBTQ parents can provide stable homes and forever families for children who need them. The following are LGBTQ friendly adoption and foster care resources that can assist with your parenting journey.

November 21, 2026 National Adoption Day
Visit www.nationaladoptionday.org

November is National Adoption Month
Visit www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/nam/

Adoption Connection
415-359-2494
https://adoptionconnection.jfcs.org
Extensive nationwide outreach for adoptive parents.
See their ad on page 52

Adoption Star
1-866-691-3300
www.adoptionstar.com
See their ad on page 50

The Barker Adoption Foundation
301-664-9664
www.barkeradoptionfoundation.org
Domestic and Intercountry adoption. Older child adoption from foster care.
See their ad on page 18

Building NY Families Law Office of Leslie Silver Hoffman
914-646-8133
New York
www.buildingnyfamilies.com
See their ad on page 56

Camp Clio
Summer camp for adopted children.
984-439-2308
https://campclio.org
Connecticut
See their ad on page 22

Families Thrive
585-232-5110
https://familiesthriveinc.org/
See their ad on page 50

Hephzibah Children's Association
708-649-7184
www.hephzibahhome.org
Become a foster parent.
Illinois
See their ad on page 29

KidSave
310-642-7283 (SAVE)
www.Kidsave.org
Kidsave connects older kids in foster care and orphanages around the world with forever families.
See their ad on page 8

New Alternatives for Children
212-696-1551
https://nackidscan.org/become-a-foster-parent/
See their ad on page 56

The Village for Families & Children
860-236-4511
thevillage.org/foster
See their ad on page 53



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Early Ages - 8th Grade

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the co-op!

The world needs collaboration
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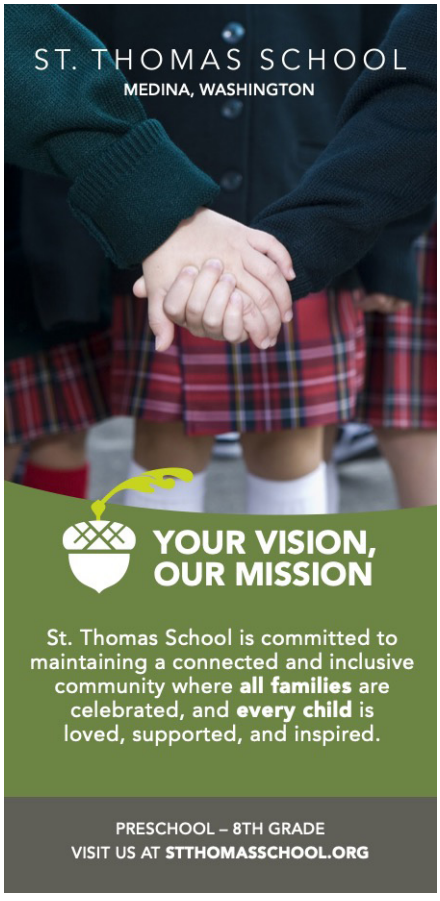




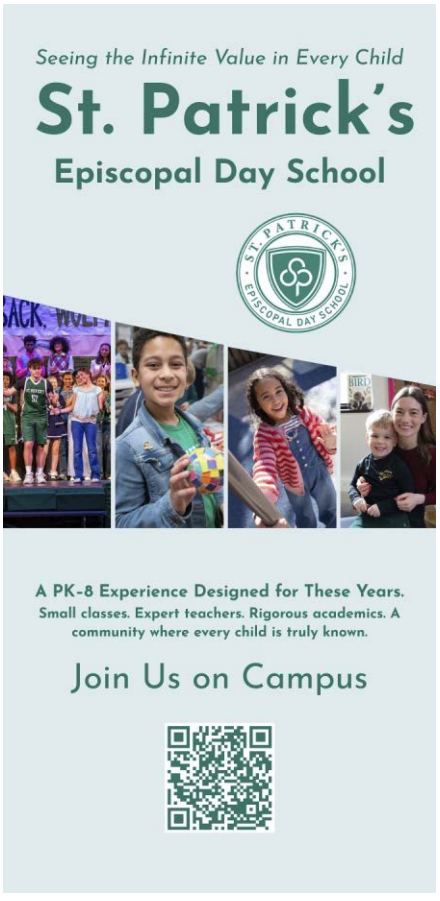
The Evergreen School

Visit us at evergreenschool.org

www.evergreenschool.org



www.stthomasschool.org



www.stpatsdc.org



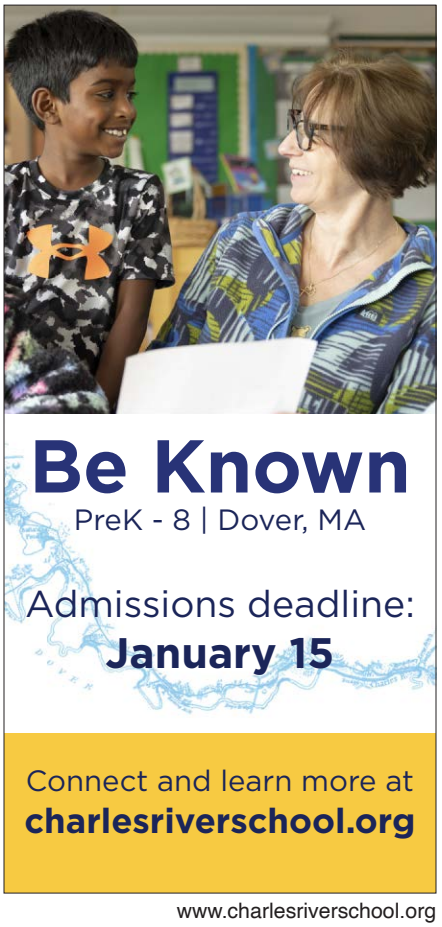
www.sprucestreetschool.org



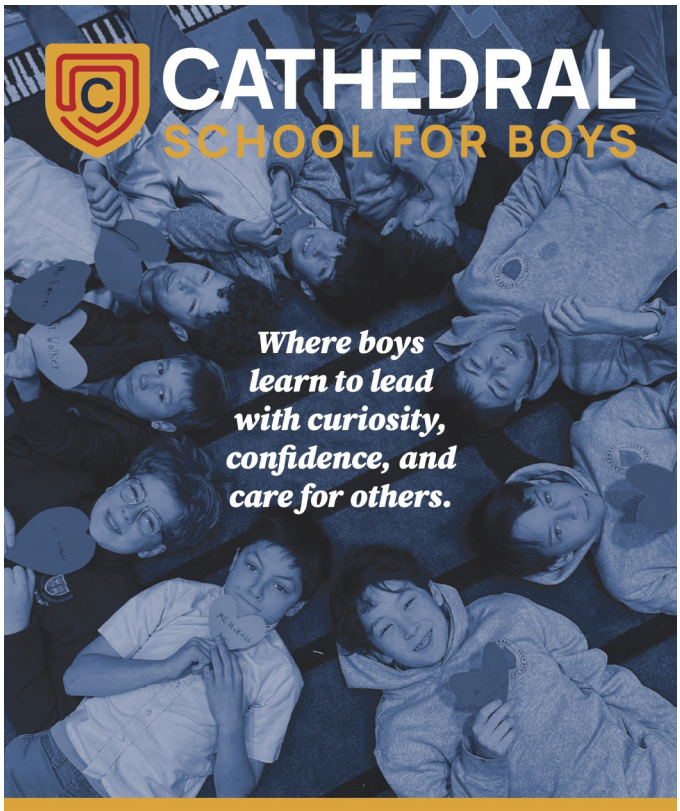
www.thevalleyschool.org



https://barkeradoptionfoundation.org/



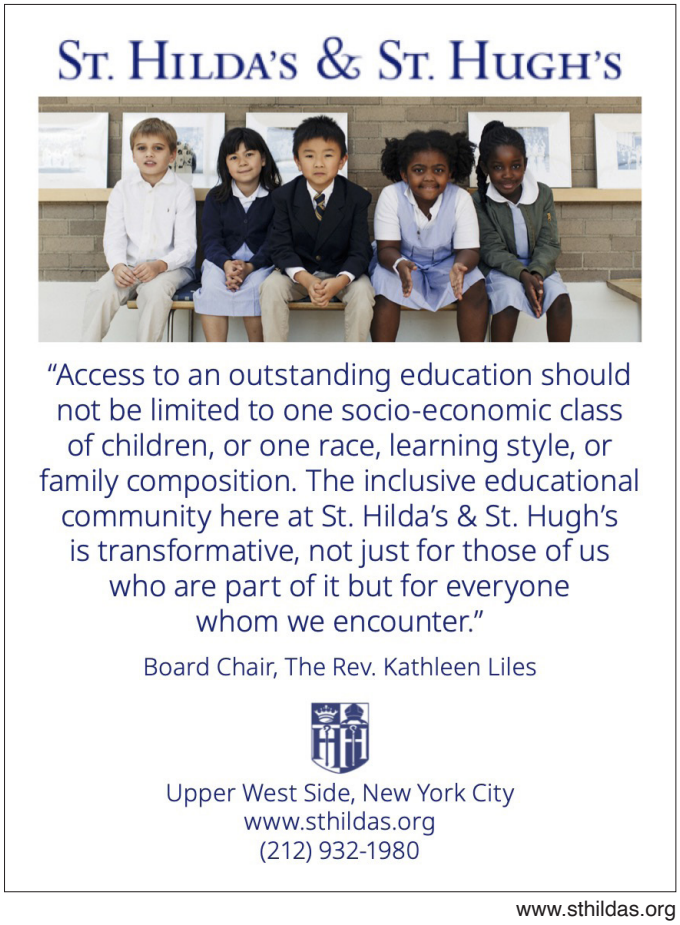
www.charlesriverschool.org



www.cathedralschool.net



www.ucds.org



www.sthildas.org



www.scds.org

28th Annual Gay Parent Magazine Independent Schools Directory

Welcome to our 28th 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, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Washington. Contact information for each school is listed alphabetically by state. Links listed are for reference only, please click on the link located below their display ads. Visit our website at https://gayparentmag.com/ to read short descriptions of some of the schools.

CALIFORNIA

Alta Vista School
450 Somerset St.
San Francisco, CA 94134
415-467-3700
Middle School
2558 Mission St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
Junior K - 8th grade
www.altavistaschool.org
See ad on page 48

Aurora School
40 Dulwich Rd.
Oakland, CA 94618
510-428-2606
https://auroraschool.org
TK - 8th grade
See ad on page 48

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
See ad on page 27

The Carey School
One Carey School Lane
San Mateo, CA 94403
650-345-8205
www.careyschool.org
Preschool - 5th grade
See ad on page 39

Cathedral School for Boys
1275 Sacramento St.
San Francisco, CA 94108
415-771-6600
www.cathedralschool.net
K - 8th grade, boys school
See ad on page 19

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 33

Crestview Preparatory School
140 Foothill Blvd.
La Canada, CA 91011
818-952-0925
www.crestviewprep.org
K - 6th grade
See ad on page 29

Echo Horizon School
3430 McManus Ave.
Culver City, CA 90232
310-838-2442
www.echohorizon.org
Pre-K - 6th grade
See ad on page 32

Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley
Elementary Campus
1009 Heinz Ave.
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 12

Escuela Bilingue Internacional
PreK - 1st grade
410 Alcatraz Ave.
Oakland, CA 94609
510-653-3324
2nd - 8th grade
4550 San Pablo Ave.
Emeryville, CA 94608
510-652-7094
www.ebinternacional.org
See ad on page 45

French American School of Silicon Valley
1522 Lewiston Dr.
Sunnyvale, CA 94087
408-746-0460
www.fassv.org
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 50

The Harker School
500 Saratoga Ave.
San Jose, CA 95129
408-249-2510
www.harker.org
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 5

Hollywood Schoolhouse
1233 N. McCadden Pl.
Hollywood, CA 90038
323-465-1320
www.hshla.org
Preschool - 6th grade
See ad on page 24

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
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 42

Julia Morgan School for Girls
5000 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94613
510-632-6000
www.juliamorganschool.org
6th - 8th grade, girls school
See ad on page 17

Marin Montessori School
5200 Paradise Dr.
Corte Madera, CA 94925
415-924-5388
www.marinmontessori.org
age 18 months - 9th grade
See ad on page 38

Millennium School
888 Turk St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-992-8520
www.millenniumschool.org
6th - 8th grade
See ad on page 58

The Oaks School
6817 Franklin Ave.
Hollywood, CA 90028
323-850-4755
www.oaksschool.org
TK - 6th grade
See ad on page 43

Prospect Sierra
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 14

PS1 Pluralistic School One
1225 Broadway
Santa Monica, CA 90404
310-394-1313 x107
www.psone.org
K - 6th grade
See ad on page 31

Sonoma Country Day School
4400 Day School Pl.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
707-284-3200
www.scds.org
TK - 8th grade
See ad on page 19

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 27

Trinity School
2650 Sandhill Rd.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-854-0288
www.trinity-mp.org
age 2 - 5th grade
See ad on page 51

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 39

West Hollywood Children's Academy
1030 N Vista St.
West Hollywood, CA 90046
310-748-1656
www.wehochildrensacademy.com
Toddler-Preschool-TK
See ad on page 38

The Willows Community School
8509 Higuera St.
Culver City, CA 90232
310-815-0411
www.thewillows.org
DK - 8th grade
See ad on page 48

Winston Preparatory School
Marin County:
1 Saint Vincent Dr.
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 23

CONNECTICUT

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 23

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 28

Beauvoir, the National Cathedral Elementary School
3500 Woodley Rd. NW
Washington DC 20016
202-537-6493
www.beauvoirschool.org
Pre-K - 3rd grade
See ad on page 57







www.wellan.org



www.seattlecountryday.org



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https://campclio.org/



www.chiaravalle.org

The Lab School of Washington
4759 Reservoir Rd. NW
Washington DC 20007
202-965-6600
www.labschool.org
1st - 12th grade, for students with dyslexia and other language based learning differences.
See ad on page 49

Lowell School
1640 Kalmia Rd. NW
Washington DC 20012
202-577-2000
www.lowellschool.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 52

National Presbyterian School
4121 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20016
202-537-7500
www.nps-dc.org
age 3 - 6th grade
See ad on page 41

St. Albans School
Mount St. Alban
Washington DC 20016
202-537-6435
www.stalbansschool.org
4th - 12th grade, boys school
See ad on page 41

St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School
Whitehaven Campus
4700 Whitehaven Parkway NW
Washington DC 20007
202-342-2805
MacArthur Campus
4590 MacArthur Blvd. NW
Washington DC 20007
202-650-5324
www.stpatsdc.org
PK3 - 8th grade
See ad on page 18

ILLINOIS

Akiba-Schecter Jewish Day School
5235 S. Cornell Ave.
Chicago, IL 60615
773-493-8880
www.akibaschecter.org
Early childhood - 8th grade
See ad on page 56



The Ancona School
4770 S. Dorchester Ave.
Chicago, IL 60615
773-924-2356
www.anconaschool.org
Primary - 8th grade
See ad on page 11

Baker Demonstration School
201 Sheridan Rd.
Wilmette, IL 60091
847-425-5800
www.bakerdemschool.org
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 55

Beacon Academy
1574 Sherman Ave.
Evanston, IL 60201
224-999-1177
https://beaconacademyil.org/
9th - 12th grade
See ad on page 46

Bennett Day School
955 W. Grand Ave.
Chicago, IL 60642
312-236-6388
www.bennettday.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 22

Chiaravalle Montessori
425 Dempster St.
Evanston, IL 60201
847-864-2190
www.chiaravalle.org
age 16 months - 8th grade
See ad on page 22

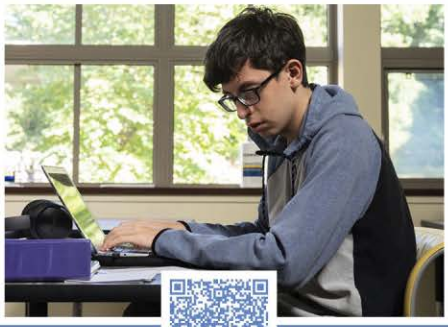
Chicago Waldorf School
5200 N. Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640
773-465-2662
www.chicagowaldorf.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 23

Francis W. Parker School
330 West Webster Ave.
Chicago, IL 60614
773-797-5107
www.fwparker.org
Junior K - 12th grade
See ad on page 48

Lake Forest Country Day School
145 S. Green Bay Rd.
Lake Forest, IL 60045
847-234-2350
www.lfcds.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
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continued on page 25

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College: University of Michigan



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Schools continued from page 22

Lycée Français de Chicago
1929 W. Wilson Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640
773-665-0066
www.lfc.world
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 40

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 43

MARYLAND

The Nora School
955 Sligo Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-495-6672
www.noraschool.org
9th -12th grade
See ad on page 17

MASSACHUSETTS

The Advent School
15 Brimmer St.
Boston, MA 02108
617-742-0520
www.adventschool.org
Pre-K - 6th grade
See ad on page 11

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 33

Brookwood School
One Brookwood Rd.
Manchester, MA 01944
978-526-4500
www.brookwood.edu
age 3 - 8th grade
See ad on page 10



Charles River School
6 Old Meadow Rd.
Dover, MA 02030
508-785-0068
www.charlesriverschool.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 18

Dedham Country Day School
90 Sandy Valley Rd.
Dedham, MA 02026
781-329-0850
www.dedhamcountryday.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 57

Derby Academy
56 Burditt Ave.
Hingham, MA 02043
781-749-0746
www.derbyacademy.org
Pre-K - 8th grade
See ad on page 41

German International School Boston
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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 46

Milton Academy
170 Centre St.
Milton, MA 02186
617-898-1798
www.milton.edu
K - 12th grade
See ad on page 13

Tenacre Country Day School
78 Benvenue St.
Wellesley, MA 02482
781-235-2282
www.tenacrecds.org
Pre-K - 6th grade
See ad on page 15

Thacher Montessori School
1425 Blue Hill Ave.
Milton, MA 02186
617-361-2552
https://thacherschool.org/
Toddler - 8th grade
See ad on page 15

Wellan Montessori School
80 Crescent Ave.
Newton Centre, MA 02459
617-969-4488
www.wellan.org
Toddler - 8th grade
See ad on page 22

NEW JERSEY

The Craig School
Lower/Middle School
10 Tower Hill Rd.
Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046
High School
25 Changebridge Rd.
Montville, NJ 07045
973-334-1234
www.craigschool.org
2nd - 12th grade, for students who learn differently.
See ad on page 40

The Elisabeth Morrow School
435 Lydecker St.
Englewood, NJ 07631
201-568-5566
www.elisabethmorrow.org
age 2 - 8th grade
See ad on page 36

The Hudson School
601 Park Ave.
Hoboken, NJ 07030
422 Willow Ave.
Hoboken, NJ 07030
201-659-8335
www.thehudsonschool.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 14

Montclair Cooperative School
65 Chestnut St.
Montclair, NJ 07044
973-783-4955
www.montclaircoop.org
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 16

Moorestown Friends School
110 E. Main St.
Moorestown, NJ 08057
856-914-4426
www.mfriends.org
age 3 - 12th grade
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Westfield Friends School
2201 Riverton Rd.
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077
856-829-0895
www.westfieldfriends.org
Preschool 2 - 8th grade
See ad on page 36

Winston Preparatory School
901 Route 10 East
Whippany, NJ 07981
973-500-6480
4th - 12th grade, for students with learning differences
See ad on page 23

NEW YORK

Barrow Street Nursery School
27 Barrow St.
New York, NY 10014
212-242-4140
www.barrowstreetnurseryschool.org
ages 19 months - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 49

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

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 28

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 15

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 44

Columbia Grammar & Preparatory School
5 W. 93rd St.
New York, NY 10025
212-749-6200
www.cgps.org
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 58

Corlears School
324 W. 15th St.
New York, NY 10011
212-741-2800
www.corlearsschool.org
Toddler-Nursery-PreK
See ad on page 12

The Dalton School
K - 3rd grade
53 E. 91st St.
New York, NY 10128
4th - Dalton E. & PE Center
200 E. 87th St.
New York, NY 10128
4th - 12th grade
108 E. 89th St.
New York, NY 10128
212-423-5200
www.dalton.org
See ad on page 21

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

The First Presbyterian Church Nursery School
12 W. 12th St.
New York, NY 10011
212-691-3432
www.fpcns.org
ages 2 - 5.3 yrs.
See ad on page 28

French-American School of New York
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145 New St.
Mamaroneck, NY 10543
High School
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Mamaroneck, NY 10543
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www.fasny.org
Nursery - 12th grade
See ad on page 25

Garden School
33-16 79th St.
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718-335-6363
www.gardenschool.org
Nursery - 12th grade
See ad on page 20

Green Meadow Waldorf School
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845-356-2514
www.gmws.org
Nursery - 12th grade
See ad on page 6

The International Preschools
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New York, NY 10028
212-371-8604
www.ipsnyc.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 29

The Kew-Forest School
119-17 Union Turnpike
Forest Hills, NY 11375
718-268-4667
www.kewforest.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 4

The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church Day School
921 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10021
212-288-9638
www.mapcds.org
ages 4 months - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 39



continued on page 30



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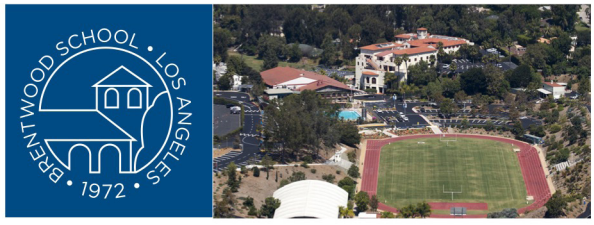
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Brooklyn, NY 11231
718-625-3939
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Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-855-0141
www.marymcdowell.org
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See ad on page 14

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 35

The Montessori Schools Flatiron & Soho
Flatiron Campus
5 W. 22nd St.
New York, NY 10010
212-633-0600
SoHo Campus
75 Sullivan St.
New York, NY 10012
212-226-3800
www.themontessori-schools.org
ages 2 yrs. - 6 yrs.
Flatiron
ages 18 months - 6 yrs.
SoHo
See ad on page 7

North Country School
4382 Cascade Rd.
Lake Placid, NY 12946
518-523-9329
https://northcountry-school.org/
4th - 9th grade, day and boarding school
See ad on page 60



Park West Montessori School
435 Central Park West
New York, NY 10025
www.twinparks.org
ages 3 months - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 28

Professional Children's School
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www.pcs-nyc.org
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www.pusteblumenyc.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 31

Riverside Montessori School
202 Riverside Dr.
New York, NY 10025
212-665-1600
www.twinparks.org
ages 3 months - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 28

Saint Ann's School
129 Pierrepont St.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
718-522-1660
www.saintannsny.org
Preschool - 12th grade
See ad on page 39

Simon's Rock at Bard College
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Bard Academy
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30 Seminary Dr.
Barrytown, NY 12507
845-752-5600
residential college for 11th or 12th graders
See ad on page 34

St. Hilda's & St. Hugh's School
619 W. 114th St.
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212-932-1980
www.sthildas.org
Nursery - 8th grade
See ad on page 19

Village Community School
272 W. 10th St.
New York, NY 10014
212-691-5146
www.vcsnyc.org
K - 8th grade
See ad on page 46

The Washington Market School
55 Hudson St.
New York,NY 10013
212-233-2176
134 Duane St.
New York, NY 10013
212-406-7271
www.washingtonmarket-school.org
ages 2 - 5 yrs.
See ad on page 51

Winston Preparatory School
126 W. 17th St.
New York, NY 10011
212-496-8400
Transitions:
240 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10016
646-869-4600
Long Island:
30 Deforest Rd.
Dix Hills, NY 11746
631-779-2400
www.winstonprep.edu
4th - 12th grade, for students with learning differences
See ad on page 23

PENNSYLVANIA

Benchmark School
2107 N. Providence Rd.
Media, PA 19063
610-565-3741
www.benchmarkschool.org
1st - 8th grade, for students with learning differences
See ad on page 37

Center School
2450 Hamilton Ave.
Abington, PA 19001
215-657-2200
www.centerschoolpa.org
1st - 8th grade
See ad on page 55

The Crefeld School
8836 Crefeld St.
Philadelphia, PA 19119
215-242-5545
www.crefeld.org
7th - 12th grade
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continued on page 33



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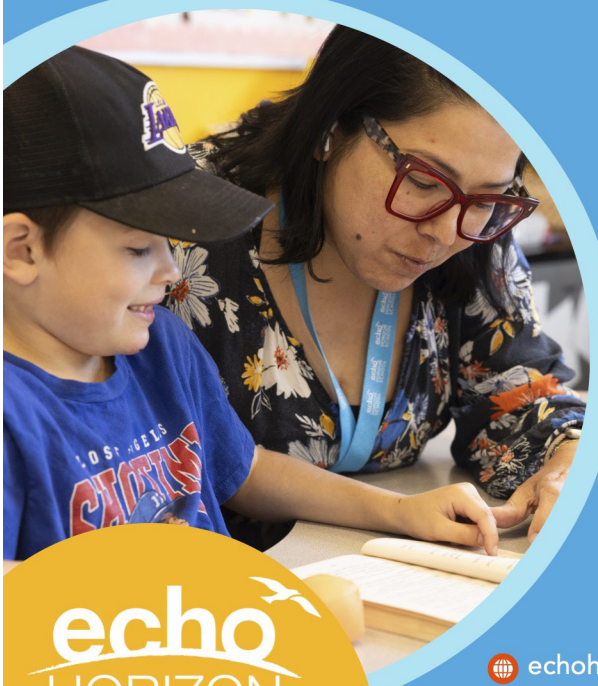
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Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 14

Germantown Academy
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www.germantownacademy.net
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 35

The Haverford School
450 Lancaster Ave.
Haverford, PA 19041
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www.haverford.org
Pre-K - 12th grade, boys school
See ad on page 40

Media-Providence School
125 W. 3rd St.
Media, PA 19063
610-565-1960
www.mpfs.org
age 3 - 8th grade
See ad on page 13

Plymouth Meeting Friends School
2150 Butler Pike
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
610-828-2288
www.pmfs1780.org
age 3 - 6th grade
See ad on page 45

Westtown School
975 Westtown Rd.
West Chester, PA 19382
610-399-0123
www.westtown.edu
Pre-K - 12th grade
See ad on page 15

RHODE ISLAND

Gordon School
45 Maxfield Ave.
East Providence, RI 02914
401-434-3833
www.gordonschool.org
Nursery - 8th grade
See ad on page 31



VIRGINIA

Burgundy Farm Country Day School
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Alexandria, VA 22303
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www.burgundyfarm.org
JK - 8th grade
See ad on page 27

Congressional School
3229 Sleepy Hollow Rd.
Falls Church, VA 22042
703-533-1064
www.congressional-school.org
Preschool - 8th grade
See ad on page 29

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www.tandemfs.org
5th - 12th grade
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Bright Water Waldorf School
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206-624-6176
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Epiphany School
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The Evergreen School
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The Kineo School
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K - 5th grade
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Seattle, WA 98109
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Choosing a Surrogacy Agency with a Proven Track Record

Fulfilling parenthood dreams is a meaningful and often complex endeavor, and choosing a surrogacy agency is one of the most important decisions an intended parent will make. While cost, location, and program structure are all important considerations, there is one factor that should never be overlooked: experience.

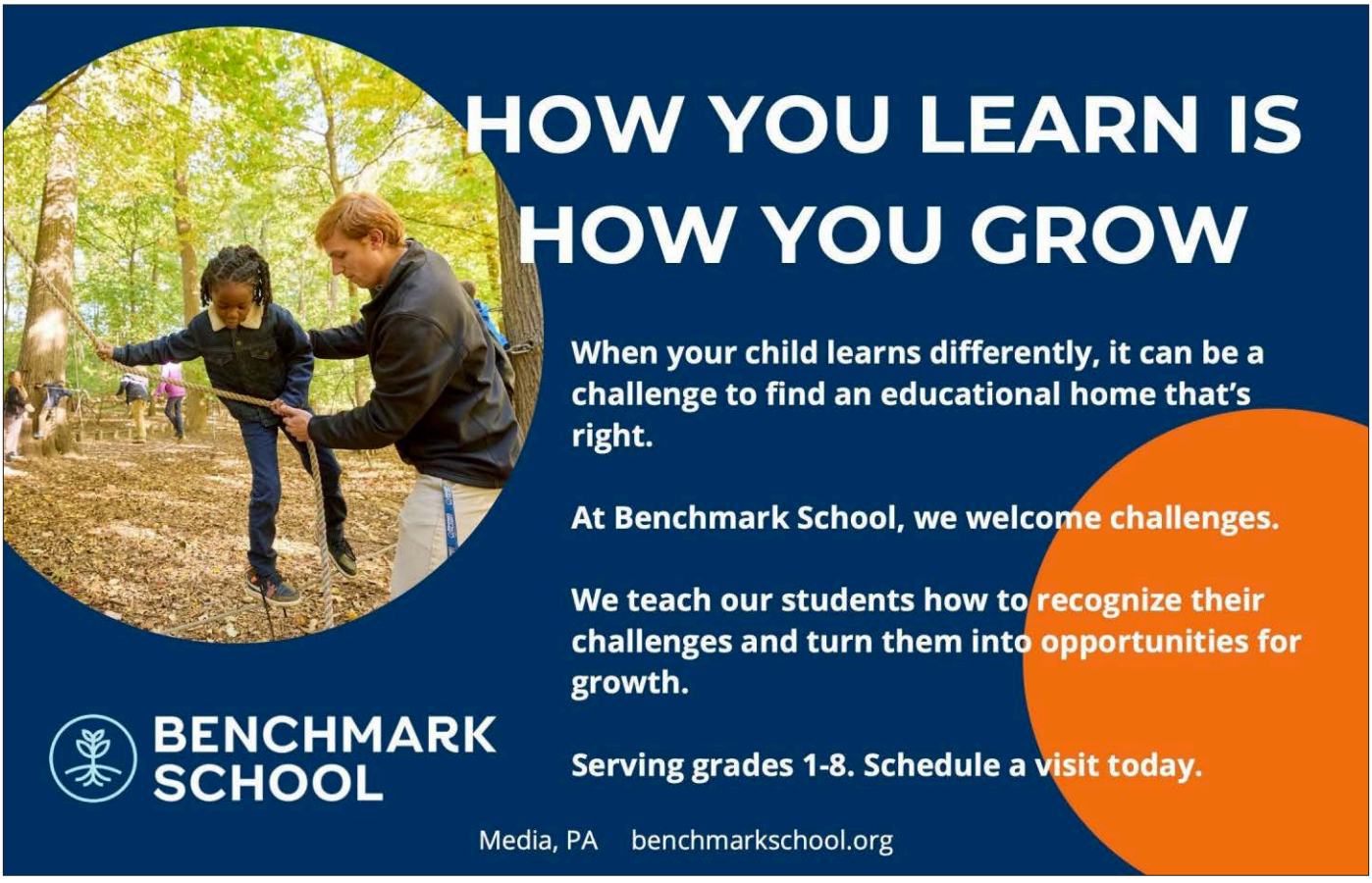
A surrogacy journey involves far more than finding a surrogate. It requires careful coordination of medical treatment, fertility care, egg donor recruitment, embryo creation, legal procedures, pregnancy management, birth planning, and post-birth support. Every journey is unique, and even the most carefully planned path can present unexpected challenges. This is where the value of an experienced agency becomes clear.

Miracle Surrogacy was founded in 2014 by parents who personally built their family through surrogacy and wanted to help others do the same. More than a decade later, Miracle Surrogacy has grown into the largest and longest-established full-service surrogacy agency in Mexico, helping intended parents from around the world achieve their dream of parenthood through surrogacy in Mexico.

Experience is important because successful surrogacy journeys are built on knowledge gained over time. An agency that has guided hundreds of intended parents through the process has developed systems, relationships, and expertise that simply cannot be replicated overnight. From coordinating international embryo shipments to navigating legal procedures and supporting intended parents through pregnancy and



Jason and his family.





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birth, experience creates confidence and stability throughout the journey.

Today, Miracle Surrogacy supports intended parents from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and many other countries who choose Mexico as their surrogacy destination. More babies are born through Miracle Surrogacy's programs each year than through all other Mexico-based surrogacy agencies combined, a reflection of the trust families place in the organization and the strength of its established processes and support systems.

As interest in surrogacy in Mexico continues to grow, intended parents are increasingly looking for agencies with a proven history of success. Miracle Surrogacy has extensive experience supporting single parents, heterosexual couples, and LGBTQ+ intended parents from around the world. This broad experience has helped establish Miracle Surrogacy as one of the leading names in international surrogacy, serving families with diverse backgrounds, goals, and family-building needs.

For intended parents in the United States, experience can be particularly valuable. International surrogacy requires coordination across borders, including transportation of reproductive tissue, legal documentation, travel planning, and post-birth procedures. Working with the largest surrogacy agency in Mexico, one that has successfully managed these processes for hundreds of American families, helps reduce uncertainty and provides reassurance during every step of the journey.

Another important advantage of an established agency is access to a large network of screened surrogates and egg donors throughout Mexico. Because Miracle Surrogacy continuously recruits and screens candidates in advance, intended parents often benefit from shorter wait times while maintaining the highest standards of medical, psychological, and background screening. This ability to efficiently coordinate surrogacy in Mexico is one of the reasons intended parents from around the world continue to choose Miracle Surrogacy.

Perhaps most importantly, experience translates into support. Intended parents deserve more than a service provider; they deserve a team that understands the emotional significance of the journey and can guide them through every milestone. From the initial consultation to bringing their baby home, Miracle Surrogacy's team remains involved every step of the way, ensuring families never feel alone in the process.



Danny and his daughter.

As the holiday season approaches, many people find themselves reflecting on the future and the goals they hope to achieve in the coming year. For intended parents, that dream is often the dream of family. As 2027 approaches, many intended parents are choosing to turn their dream of parenthood into a plan. With an experienced team, a proven track record, and a position as the largest surrogacy agency in Mexico, Miracle Surrogacy remains committed to helping families begin that journey with confidence through a trusted and established international surrogacy program.Visit

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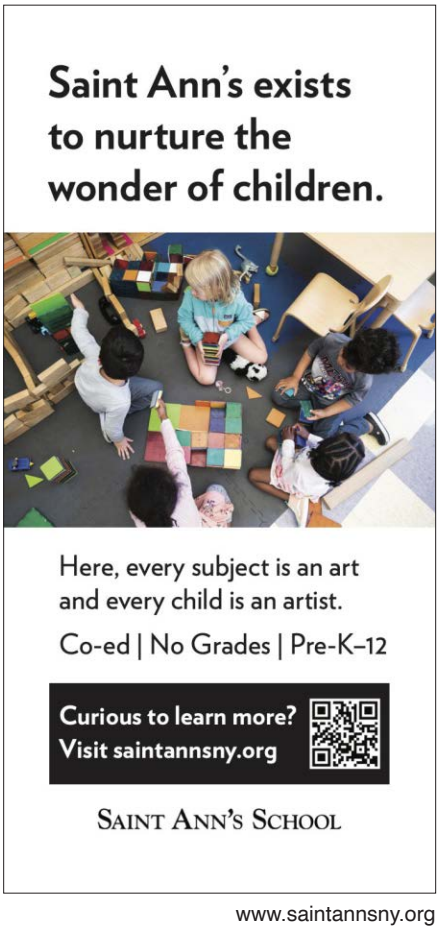
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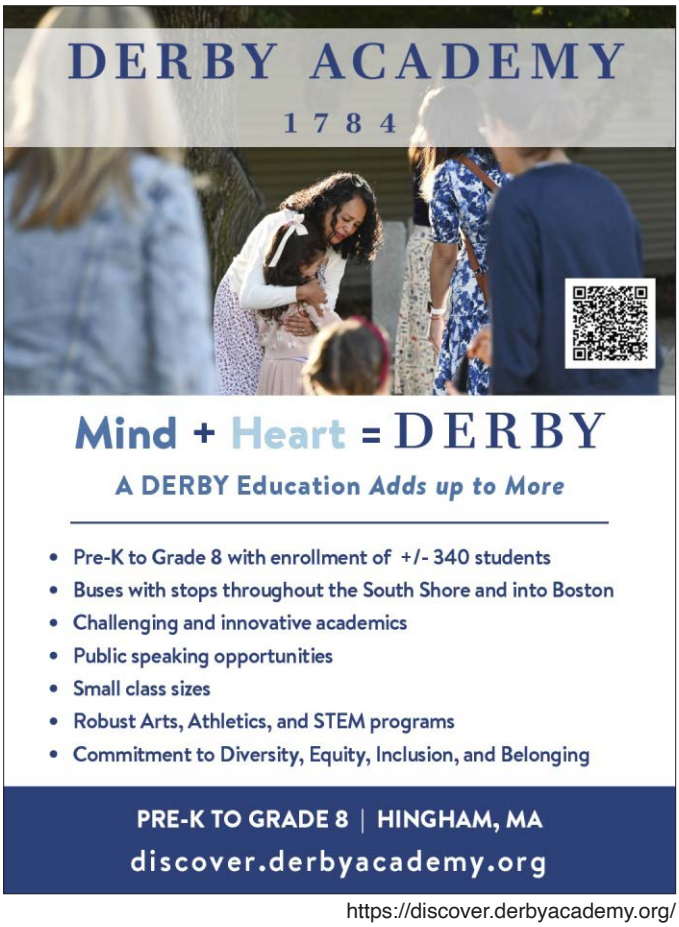
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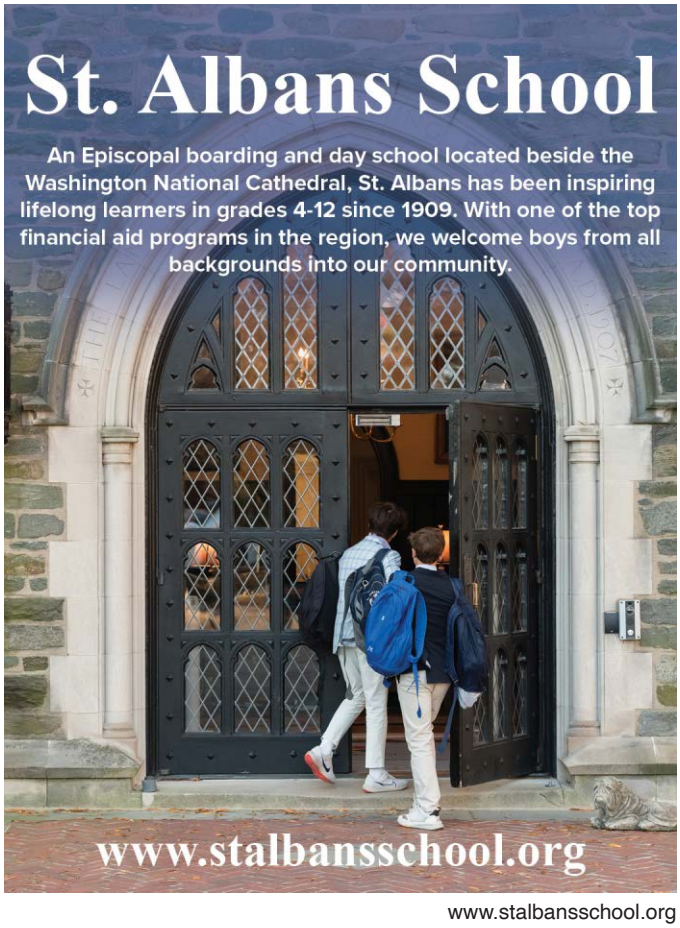
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On Montessori, Kindness, and the Seeds We Sow

By Gráinne Murray

Integrity is doing the right thing, even if nobody is watching.

— C.S. Lewis

In recent years, we've experienced a growing sense of stress and uncertainty in our world, and it's clear that this impacts our children. Everywhere they go, children are watching and learning. As the Head of School at Bay Farm Montessori Academy, I look to my teachers to cultivate an environment that fosters kindness, belonging, and a sense of community. I believe we have both an opportunity and an obligation, not only to create a school culture where children can learn foundational values, but to model those values ourselves, in how we speak, how we listen, and how we treat one another. When we rise to meet this opportunity, children learn there is great strength in doing good in the world while remaining humble and kind.

Children also learn from one another. Last spring, I had the privilege of watching a group of sixth graders present their year-long research projects. Each student chose a topic they were passionate about, culminating in impressive presentations filled with insightful information. What truly captivated me, though, was not the quality of their work; it was the audience of younger students, ranging in age from five to eleven.



The author, Gráinne Murray, second from left, with her wife Michele and two of their five children, Emily (left) and Dylan.

When the first student presenter



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finished, Olivia, an eleven-year-old who has been a part of our school community since she was three, raised her hand and said, “I can tell how much work you put into that, and I really appreciate learning from it. Thank you.” Without any prompting, one by one, the younger children echoed this appreciation. “That was a good project,” chimed in a five-year-old from the front row. I watched as children shifted in their seats to get a better view, with a seven-year-old whispering, “Excuse me, can you make room for Lila?” and a ten-year-old offering their seat to a teacher.

Olivia had set a tone of respect and admiration that carried through every presentation that followed. She embodied the very values we aim to nurture, and one by one, her peers followed her lead, each finding their own words of encouragement to offer the presenters. It didn't matter that some presentations were more polished than others; everyone felt celebrated and seen. The community, the appreciation, the empathy, the kindness: it was everything we strive to model, happening naturally. At a moment when these qualities can feel increasingly rare in the wider world, it was a gift to witness, reminding myself and the rest of the faculty why our work matters so deeply.

While Olivia’s story affirms that our school’s culture is one of acceptance, appreciation, and kindness, much of the culture outside our school walls has seemingly grown in the opposite direction. Curiosity about differences has too often been replaced by distrust, and humility is too often dismissed as weakness. It's essential that schools become havens of warmth, where children’s innate kindness and curiosity are thoughtfully nurtured, where differences are cherished for what they teach us and how they open our minds. Because when children feel safe to show up

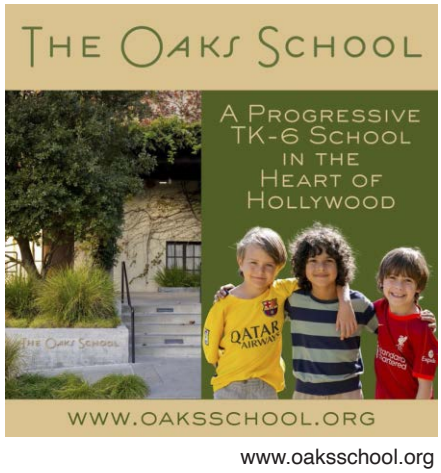


Gráinne (right) and Michele with their son Daniel in Amsterdam last year.

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exactly as they are, we remove barriers to inclusion, and only then can they truly flourish, knowing they are welcomed and valued for who they are.

The belief in peaceful coexistence is central to Montessori philosophy. Children are encouraged to embrace diversity and understand different perspectives. Dr. Maria Montessori envisioned children as the peacemakers of the future, and her approach reflects a profound respect for each child as an individual. Children who feel seen develop a strong sense of self, one that lets them stand for what they understand to be good and right while opening their hearts to the good in others. From that foundation, they begin to recognize the unique gifts they, and those around them, have to contribute to the world.

That afternoon with Olivia serves as a reminder to me of what we as educators are doing here: sowing seeds. Montessori philosophy asks us to trust children, to believe they are capable of shaping a kinder, more peaceful, more accepting world. At Bay Farm, I see that trust rewarded every day, in small moments that build, one by one, into something much larger: a community where children learn, early and often, that who they are is enough. Together, I believe we can cultivate a culture where kindness and humility flourish, creating a brighter future for all.

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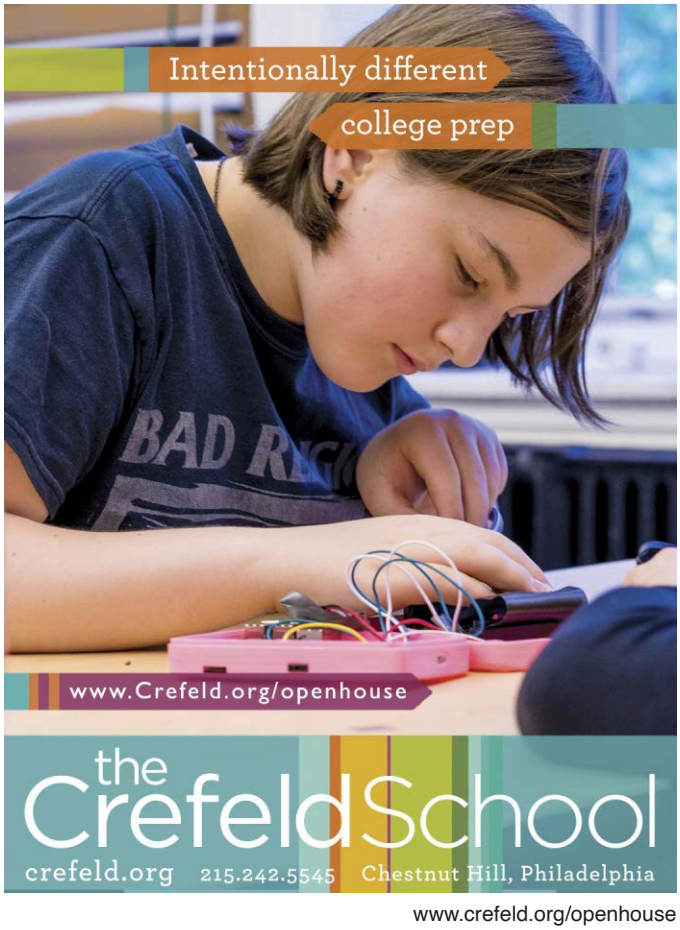
Gráinne Murray, pictured right, was appointed Head of School at Bay Farm Montessori Academy in 2024. Gráinne is an experienced school leader, and an expert in Montessori pedagogy with a proven record in community building. Her passion for cultivating relationships and fostering connections has been a driving force of successful enrollment management and fundraising.

Gráinne earned her Early Childhood Education teaching credential from The Princeton Center for Montessori Education in 2003. She graduated with a Master of Educational Leadership & Policy Studies from the University of Richmond, VA, and she earned her undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Science) from Trinity College Dublin, Ireland before emigrating to Boston in 1987. Gráinne believes in service to the school as well as the community at large. She is proud of her success in growing leaders from within and collaborating with accreditation teams to support the advancement of independent schools.

Photos courtesy of Gráinne Murray



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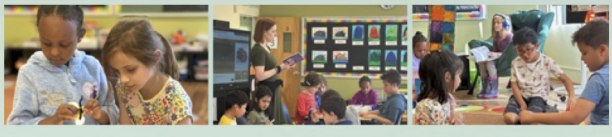


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Every day, students learn alongside classmates from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Those interactions help shape a community where students are encouraged to ask questions, appreciate different perspectives, and engage thoughtfully with the world around them.

Our community is strengthened by the many backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences that students and families bring to Garden. We believe every family should feel welcomed, respected, and reflected in the life of the school. At Garden, students are known, supported, and encouraged to be themselves, while families become active members of a close-knit community. Our small class sizes help foster meaningful relationships between students and teachers, creating an environment where every child is seen as an individual.

While our history is an important part of who we are, Garden School has never stood still. We have evolved alongside the community we serve, embracing new perspectives while remaining grounded in the values of respect, inclusion, and belonging.

Today, we are proud to be a school that reflects the diversity and spirit of Jackson Heights. Just as importantly, we are proud to be a place where families can find a genuine sense of community and where every child feels they belong.



For more information visit www.gardenschool.org. ▼

This article was first published in Gay Parent Magazine's September-October 2026 issue #168.

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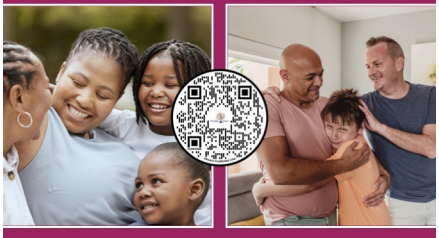
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OH BABY

By Stewart Lewis



The author, Stewart Lewis (left) with his daughter Rowan.

Our fourth date was the birth of my daughter.

I knew he was a keeper as all he brought to the hospital was a cute card for me and a tiny baby suit for her, leaving all judgement behind. It didn't matter that I was gay guy having a child with a female fan of my music who probably thought I was going to be famous. Steve was just there to support me, with his lovely bald head and stylish glasses, a 50 year-old with the smile of a boy. He'd recently come out, so in a sense he was a boy, discovering a new world for the first time. Yes, I had to clear his closet of plaids and dated brown shoes, but there he was. The sophisticated good looks of an executive and the energy of a kid in a candy store.

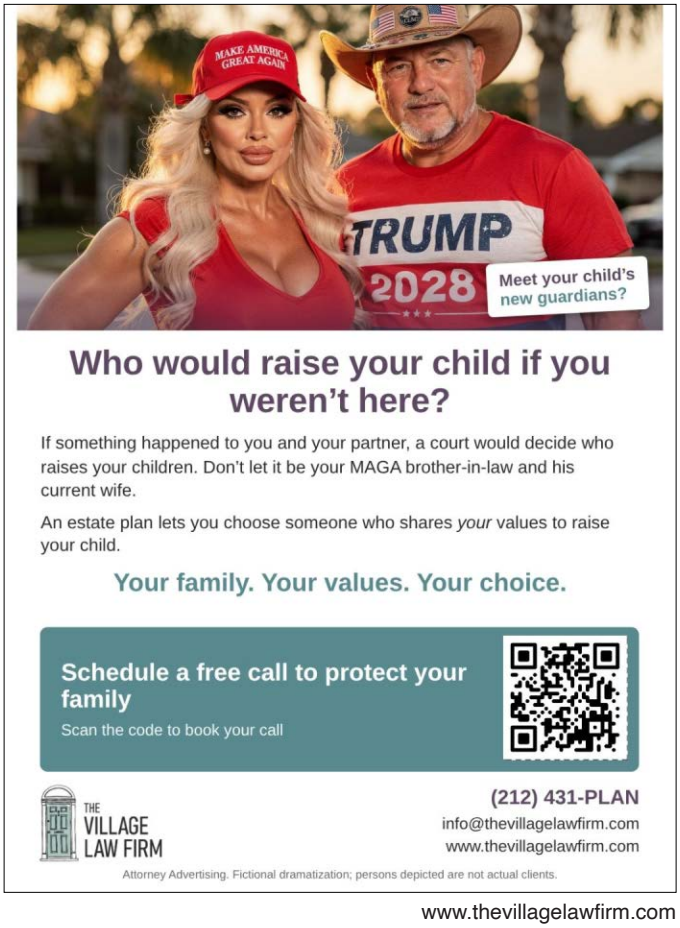
June 16th, 2006, I cut the umbilical cord and my baby screamed. She was beautiful, we could tell from the start. I'd brought my guitar and played her a song as she wriggled on the little heated bed. I'll never forget Steve in the doorway, a single tear escaping underneath his glasses like a raindrop down a window pane.

Later that night, in bed, I told him he was a trooper.

"I think it's great what you're doing. It's another layer, another interesting part about you."

I thought about some of the other people in my life who had quite different reactions.

"Well, I appreciate it. I don't know what it is, but I feel so comfortable around you."



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"Really? How about we get more comfortable," he said, nuzzling his face into my neck.

It was like that noise your phone makes when it gets plugged into a charger. A soft, warm…not a ding, deeper than that...a reverberation. When he kissed me, the lightning bolt appeared inside my battery icon and I knew I was ok, I would last, he would bring me to a hundred percent.

"You plug me in." I said.

"What?"

"Nothing." It wasn't nothing, but it was something I would keep to myself.

Steve was the soft yet solid ground I needed. The perfect house at the end of a winding road. We shared the love of eating at the bar (making what we call 20-minute friends), travelling (we'll always have Ravello), live music (Sara Bareilles and Tony Bennet were two standouts), exercise (not gym rats but yes, devoted) and naps (especially now that we're, ahem, older).



Stewart with his husband Steve (left).

We moved into a loft together in Manhattan, where my daughter Rowan would visit as a toddler. I was winging it as a father but Steve had done it twice in his other straight life, raising two wonderful, now grown men. He not only guided me but came through at crucial moments, like when she was shaking in the bathtub and I was so freaked out I didn't even think to give her medicine. Steve came home and immediately took control. As I watched him cradle her back to normalcy, I marveled at my good fortune. It sounds simple, but he was the first boyfriend that never made me feel bad. He was inherently empathetic and kind, not to mention he could fix anything: faucets, light fixtures, in this case a child's fever.

One morning, as he was watching his coffee brew and I was assembling a smoothie, I told him about the dream I had the night before.

"My mother was walking *continued on page 56*



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Stewart Lewis continued from page 54

me down the aisle," I told him.

I got no response. He simply stared harder at the coffee brewing. I didn't bring it up again until he was halfway through his first mug.

"The vision for me was always a husband and a child," I said. "But I never thought it would be possible. Now I have this beautiful girl, and…"

He hugged me. He smelled like bright citrus soap and dreams.

"I don't think I could get married again," he said.

I gulped my smoothie to hide the sting. It was silly to think that everything I pictured would come true. But every time I walked by a bridal store, or saw a male couple's wedding picture in the *New York Times*, I thought, *it could still happen*.

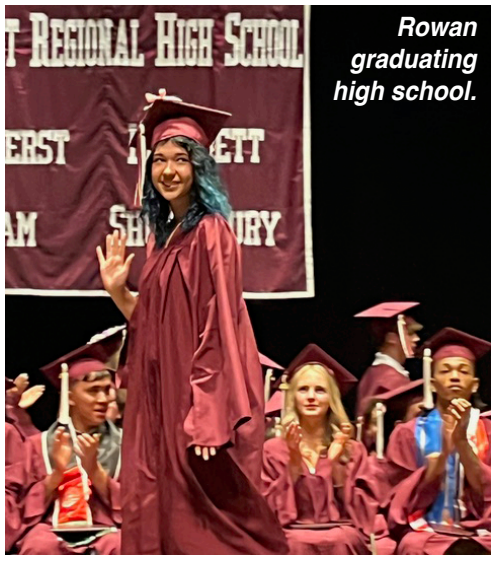
About a year later, at an Inn on Nantucket, the sun just gone, the sky a canvas of red brush strokes above us, we walked down a sloping lawn out onto a dock over the sound, where he grabbed a ring he'd hidden under a storage box, got on one knee and said, "I want to give you all of me."

My heart filled with joy on tap. I could barely breathe.

"Will you marry me?" He asked.

"Yes!" I was able to say between hyperventilating, tears churning out of my eyes. I was so lucky, so grateful, so completely over the moon and every star.

After our grand wedding where our families and friends gathered on a fall evening overlooking the dunes of the same island where he proposed, we moved from NYC to DC and started our married life. Rowan visited as a tween and said flying alone was "Like, no big deal." She was really becoming a sharp, curious person and it was fascinating to watch her evolve. The three of us would go get pizza and play games at the table (Steve never really liked playing games but did it for Rowan), go see Cirque del soleil (most likely the seed of Rowan becoming the dancer she is today), and ride

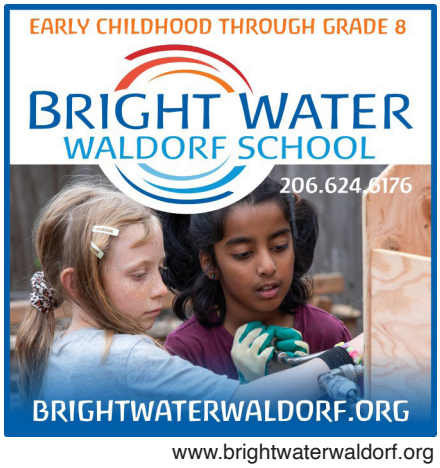


on roller coasters (it was worth it hearing her squeal with delight even if I was turning green).

The dream got better. We built our dream house on the island, and Rowan visited every summer. It felt like one of those commercials pushing some kind of medication. The three of us laughing



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in the waves, the sun glistening on our skin, our Frenchie Oliver watching from underneath the beach umbrella. An idealistic tableau before they list the side effects. May cause: death of mother whom you adore more than anyone in the world, loss of husband's job which was his whole identity, baby mama drama, emotional wounds from a teenager's disdain, two pesky kidney stones.

But maybe that's why love exists. By living in each other's light, we can see in the dark. Steve is the person who administered the last bit of morphine to my mother, I am the person who held him in the middle of the night while he trembled with crippling anxiety. Steve is my voice of reason, and would do anything for me, as I would for him. Love is doing, sacrificing, showing up. Knowing when to keep quiet.

Recently, Rowan graduated high school, and when her name was called, we were like two crazed maniacs. Filming, taking still shots, yelling, about to jump out of our seats and onto the stage. Rowan looked at us, her smile a beacon. Yes, she had an unconventional childhood, but we were always in her life, and we always will be.



Stewart with his daughter Rowan.

I looked over and saw that same raindrop tear in Steve's eye, the one that rolled underneath his glasses 18 years ago in the hospital doorway, and I thought, *Oh baby. We went as a river, and we have curved so far, around so many bends. Eventually we will reach the ocean and be washed away, but we can say we loved.*

We loved. ▼

Stewart Lewis has published eight novels, one of which is becoming a feature film he co-produced. He has since written and directed two short films, including the rom-com COOKIES which is currently in the festival circuit. For more information, visit www.stewartlewis.com.

Photos courtesy of Stewart Lewis



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Babies, Babies with Two Daddies

By Davidson Lloyd

"Oh, you're a gay couple," a cynical friend said, "You'll wait a long time to adopt a child."

For years we talked about bringing a child into our family. We had excuses; we're not ready. We don't have enough money. Money never stopped our own parents from having five children, respectively. We wondered if our moment would ever arrive, or would we keep putting it off until it was a dream we never pursued with full passion?

In October 1997, Tom's mother, Pat, was diagnosed with cancer. Her illness was sudden, unexpected, and shocking to the family. By Thanksgiving, the cancer had spread throughout her body, and we lost her on December 1, 1997 (World AIDS Day). Tom was at her bedside when she died. That night he called me from Bristol, Rhode Island.

We began the tsunami of paperwork that all adoptive parents must plow through. The adoption home study alone is enough to discourage anyone from continuing the adoption process. The social workers asked questions of us, gay men, that would never be asked of heterosexual couples. They didn't ask bluntly about sexual practices, but the "tone" of the questioning was surely there.

"My mother regretted she couldn't have lived to see us have children of our own," Tom said. There was another silence on the telephone. I could sense his breathing.

"Are you still there? Are you okay?" I asked.

"Yes. I think it's time," he said.

#

Standing on our porch outside our house in Venice, Art, our faithful dog by our side, looking up into the immense universe, Tom said, "We're ready. Send us a child."

After that, we launched into baby research: visiting agencies, exploring surrogacy (too expensive), foster-to-adopt possibilities, adoption through a lawyer, the County, foreign adoptions. We went to adoption workshops, seminars, classes and plowed through volumes of adoption books, magazines, articles.

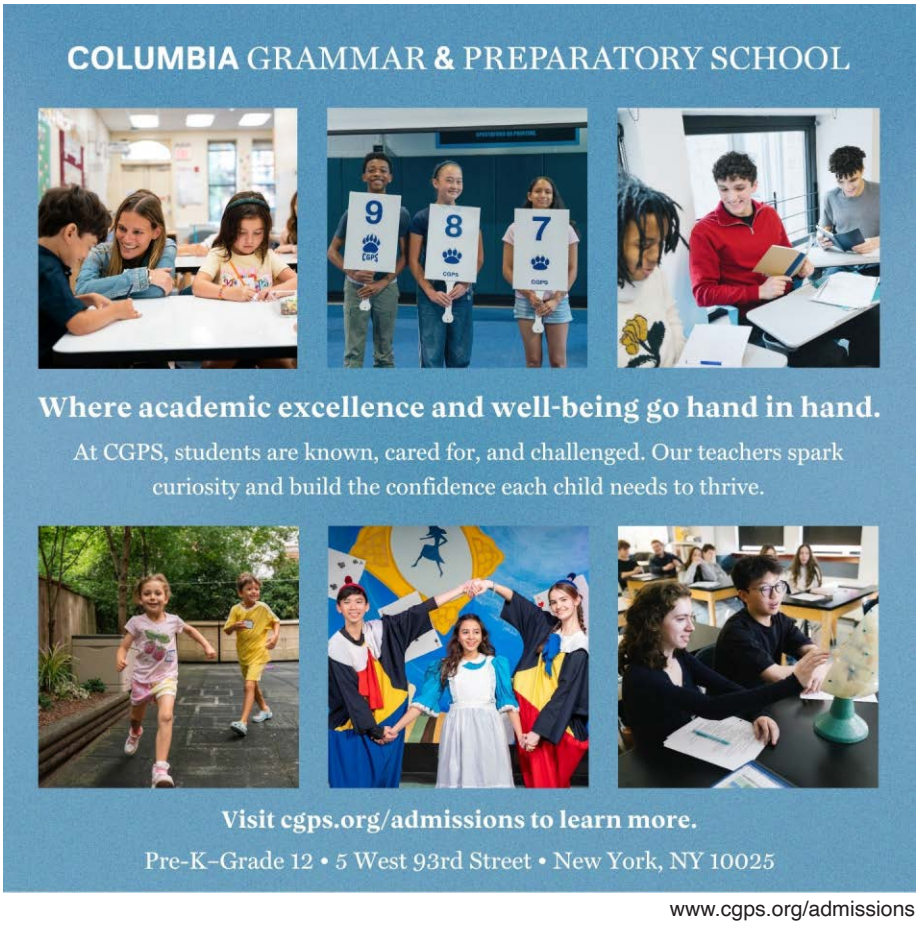
In 1998, we were in the vanguard of gay men, single and couples attempting to become parents. The gayby boom was beginning to flower. Gay men were breaking through society's prejudice that gay men could not be parents, could not care for, nurture, support, love, or understand the complexities and realities of childrearing. Parenting is not



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Davidson Lloyd (left) with Tom Keegan holding their daughter, Connor Keegan-Lloyd, and Art, their dog. Connor was 7 days old in this photo.

gender specific. Good parenting comes from within. Just because you can make a baby does not mean you can parent one.

After months of research, we chose an adoption agency, the Independent Adoption Center (IAC). The IAC, at that time, had had only two same-sex adoption clients. We contacted them. One couple said: "Your lives will change forever." The second couple said: "It's the most challenging job you'll ever have--and the most rewarding."

Cliches are cliches for a reason—because they are often true. But I think we were hoping for something more, something that was particular to "gay parenting": How could we help our child explain to the other children that he/she had two dads instead of a mom and a dad? We would have to find answers through our own baby experience. Our hearts were about to embark upon unknown adventure.

We began the tsunami of paperwork that all adoptive parents must plow through. The adoption home study alone is enough to discourage anyone from continuing the adoption process. The social workers asked questions of us, gay men, that would never be asked of heterosexual couples. They didn't ask bluntly about sexual practices, but the "tone" of the questioning was surely there.

We worked on our birthmother letter, a combination of personal and promotional information: we live on a tree-lined street; in a safe, secure neighborhood. There were pictures of us, our dog, Art, our house, and our huge extended family. Once our letter was completed, it went into the IAC's birthmother distribution system. Once a birthmother makes an application with the agency, the letters are sent to them, to help them choose possible adoptive parents. Of the hundreds of letters, the agency was sending out, we were the only gay couple.

Our birthmother's letter went into the IAC system, August 1, 1998. Echoes of the cynics' voice: "You're a gay couple. You will wait a long time to adopt a child," rang in my ears. Maybe there was a grain of truth there. Maybe we *would* wait a long time.

A week later we got a call from a birthmother. Wow! A response so quickly! We were excited. Our conversations with her soon became confusing. We felt she was asking for something but would not be clear as to what she wanted—probably money.

Though it is illegal to "buy a baby," people will still try and get money from prospective adoptive parents.

"If we let this one go, will there be another?" I asked the social worker.

Our social worker made the decision for us. She felt it was some sort of scam and advised us not to follow through. Scams in the adoption world are quite common. Adoptive parents are very vulnerable and can feel desperate to have a child, time is running out, and therefore don't see the signs of being duped.

Adoption is a delicate dance between birthparent(s) and the prospective adoptive parents. It might be a waltz, or you might rhumba alone. We attended the IAC support group, watching other group members bring in their newly arrived babies. Their joy was contagious. We listened to their stories as though they had just returned from some exotic land and were bringing back a rare and precious treasure to share with the ones waiting in the village. From the beginning, we wanted a newborn.

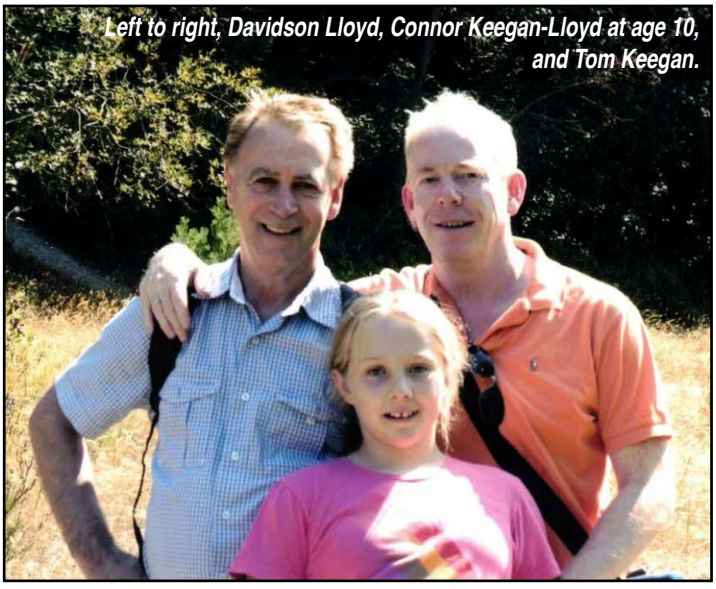
The couples or single parents with their new arrivals always offered hope to the rest of the group members. "Soon this will be you with your baby," one recent adoptive mother said. We were the only same-sex couple in the group. If anyone in the support group ever questioned two men adopting, no one ever said anything. We were all there for the same magical purpose. Everyone was supportive of everyone getting their baby.

In October 1998, we received a call from a young woman who would become our birthmother. She was nineteen, lived in Little Rock, Arkansas, knew she was too young to raise a child alone. We agreed to meet her and her mother Thanksgiving weekend in Memphis, Tennessee, home of The King, Elvis Presley, to "make a match" if possible.

She had seen our pictures from our birthmother letter, so she knew what we looked like, but we had no idea what she looked like. Our birthmother and her mother were in the "dog world," raising and showing dogs, in competition, like on the National Dog Show that follows the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. She was going to show a dog, a beagle, that weekend in Memphis.

We chose to meet her at a Cracker Barrel (an anti-gay company) near the dog show arena. She arrived with her mother. Her shoulder-length blonde hair framed her green eyes, giving a softness to her face, which seemed fuller due to her pregnancy. She reminded me of a young Joanne Woodard. She was shy, nervous; we were shy, nervous.

For hours we talked about our lives, our careers, our families, our long commitment and relationship, our dreams of having a child in our lives. One of the things that attracted her to us was our dog, Art. Like her, we were "dog people." She said she got four hundred birthmother letters from the agency, and we were her first choice.



Left to right, Davidson Lloyd, Connor Keegan-Lloyd at age 10, and Tom Keegan.

They were comfortable with gay men, having gay friends in the dog world. At dinner one night in a paddlewheel-boat restaurant on the Mississippi River, the birth grandmother said, "I would drop my daughter in the middle of a group gay men and walk away knowing she would be taken care of." By the end of the weekend, the match was made.

We spent December 1998 on the telephone with our birthmother—sometimes twice a day. "We plan on coming to Little Rock the first week of January," I told her on the telephone. Never did she indicate what the gender of the baby might be. We didn't care.

In January 1999, we traveled to Little Rock to await the birth of the baby. Many years ago I'd had my first professional acting job in Little Rock at the Olde West Dinner Theater performing in *Under the Yum Yum Tree*. The night we arrived in Little Rock they took us to that same Dinner Theater where I'd performed in 1967. A poster of our production of *Under the Yum Yum Tree* was still hanging in the lobby. I took it as a sign. Me and my signs!

The baby was not to arrive until the end of January, so I stayed in Little Rock and Tom returned to California. I was with our birthmother and her mother every day. We took drives, had lunch or dinner, and went to the movies. They showed me the sights of Little Rock, including Bill Clinton's hangouts, which included his favorite McDonald's.

One day, at a restaurant in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where Bill Clinton grew up, our birthmother asked, "What color of clothing do you have for the baby?" It seemed like a test.

"We don't have a particular color in mind. We've bought garments in white and yellow. Those seem like safe colors," I told her.

"You might think pink."

PAUSE.

"Or blue," she said, smiled and went back to her tuna sandwich. I had a feeling the baby was going to be female.

Our soon-to-be-daughter would be born in the South, where prejudice towards gays and lesbians existed then and still exists now, but through all the subtle and not-so-subtle homophobia, which we subtly or not-so-subtly acknowledged, we found help from many of the people we encountered. Horror, hope, help, homophobia, they can all be part of the gay adoption journey.

We were there with one purpose--to receive this child the Universe was steering into our lives. Later, challenges by Southern bureaucratic "agencies of prejudice" would present temporary obstacles in our quest to make our daughter part of our family. I would be dishonest if I only portrayed our adoption journey as a gay variation of an episode of *The Brady Bunch*.

Nature was providing the perfect dramatic backdrop for the birth scenario. The January days in Little Rock were cold and gray most of the time. There were reports of tornadoes headed for Little Rock. On an outing with the birthmother and her mom, the sky suddenly became ominous, threatening heavy rain on the horizon, darkness at noon. The radio reported two tornadoes bouncing around in the area and advised that everyone take cover. We passed trees wrapped in corrugated sheet metal shawls and barns flattened and scattered.

We found shelter inside a giant Sam's Club and waited for the tornadoes to pass overhead.

"Grab a pillow," the birth grandmother said.

"What for?"

"To protect your head in case of falling glass," she yelled.



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Left to right, Tom Keegan, Connor Keegan-Lloyd at age 27, and Davidson Lloyd.

In the excitement and danger, I thought our birthmother might give birth right there between the coffee and the chocolates. A young woman nearby was crying hysterically. The birth grandmother shouted, "Give that girl some chocolate." Holy shit! Was that some Southern remedy for hysteria? Sigmund Freud should have tried bon-bon therapy.

She did not give birth at Sam's Club.

The hospital where our child was to be born had a new maternity and delivery wing and at this time our birthmother was the only patient on the floor. Tom returned to Little Rock, we hung out in the lobby, pacing like expectant fathers, watching the rain bathe much of the town.

Once the maternity ward director and her nurses realized we did not have horns, and that the hospital floor was not going to suddenly open wide and thrust all of us into Hell, they completely embraced us. They gave us a private room, so we did not have to loiter in the lobby. We had taken many classes about caring for a baby, but these women graciously gave us practical instructions.

It was still raining in Little Rock when our daughter made her appearance into this world. At 9:43 p.m. the director came running down the hallway, carrying her in her arms.

"Follow me, guys," she shouted, and we were off to the receiving room. When I saw her, I realized this was real! This was it—from here on she would be our life-long responsibility.

She was tiny. They cleaned her eyes, nose, mouth, feet, and body. I gently pressed my finger into her tiny palm and whispered, *"I promise you two things, love and support."* One of the nurses pressed each of her footprints onto a clean, starched, blue hospital gown and handed it to me.

"Is this for the birthmother?" I asked the nurse.

"No, it's for you."

The first ten minutes of her life would be the first ten minutes of our lives forever.

Like many newborns she was jaundiced, so we could not return home immediately after the birth. Tom would lay on the floor of our hotel room with her in his arms as the sunlight came streaming in through the window, bringing warmth and healing.

As we like to travel, we said to her, "You must be baby-to-go" I said to her, so at seven days old she made her first airplane flight. She has been a great traveler ever since.

For the most part, our adoption story was somewhat free from the heights of drama. Every adoption story has adventures of its own. Hopefully, they are manageable and not catastrophic. Life is messy. Drama is free-floating; it goes with living.

When your child is born outside the state in which you live, an amended birth certificate must be obtained from the original state of birth. Thus, we needed to get the amended birth certificate from the state of Arkansas. We thought it was a simple procedure. You request a form from the Arkansas Department of Health; you fill it out with the name of the mother, the name of the father. If you're a heterosexual couple, that is what happens. If you're gay, the procedure takes on a whole different lopsided avenue towards certification.

When you are caring for your baby, daily, moment-to-moment, holding her, bonding with her, attending to her every need, being joyous at every new discovery she experiences, you begin to feel your own innocence and vulnerability re-emerging. Every day, as your child experiences something for the first time, you experience it as well. You forget how unkind and dispassionate the world can be.

We forgot we were "gay parents." We thought we were "just parents." We were about to be served a southern reality sandwich, and the taste would not be sweet. As instructed by the lawyer at the IAC, we submitted the amended birth certificate request form to the Arkansas Department of Health.

On the line for "mother" we crossed out "mother," wrote in "father," and put one of our names on that line. The form was returned to us, stamped: REJECTED. FORM ALTERED. They returned our $12 check.

We sent in another form, this time *not* crossing out "mother" but just putting one of our names on that line. The form was rejected and returned to us, along with our check for $12.

We ignored the Southern fragrance of homophobia, being too involved in the euphoria of parenthood. But something was beginning to smell rotten in Little Rock.

I called the Arkansas Department of Health. I wanted to speak to a person and try to understand what the difficulty might be. A strong Southern-accented female voice answered the telephone. Trying to be helpful, I suggested she retrieve our form for reference, thinking it would be helpful for both of us to have the form in front of us.

"You must get a lot of these requests," I said.

"Not from two men, I don't," she snapped back. "The Arkansas Department of Health does not issue amended birth certificates to two men."

There it was, straight from the homophobe's mouth, unsweetened and bitter. No subtlety there. I tried to be calm; tried not to react to the knot tightening in my stomach. I wanted to scream "bigot" into the telephone, but instead I thanked her and hung up. After all, she was "just following orders."

We thought about leaving the birth certificate as it was issued by the hospital, with the birthmother's name on it, but she was our child and should have our names on the birth certificate. It would cause

problems for her, and for us, as she got older: passport, ID cards, Social Security identification, school registrations, classes, customs, and immigration exits and entrances, any forms that require parents' information.

We were given the names of two lawyers in Little Rock. I called one and told her our story.

"This is ridiculous," were her first words. "They should have just processed the request and not caused you all this hassle. Arkansas is so slow to change."

Weeks and months went by. We were communicating with her, sometimes daily.

"Patricia, you need to bill us for all the time you're spending going back and forth with the Arkansas Department of Health."

"I'm expensive, Davidson. "I'm $95 an hour," she informed me.

I gulped! Our lawyer in Los Angeles was $350 an hour. In almost the year she spent working for us she never charged us a cent.

"How can I charge you for something that should have been so simple and easy for my state to provide?"

Again, a woman had come to the rescue for us and our child. I have told this story to our daughter because I want her to be conscious of the strength, kindness, and human generosity this woman extended to us and, by extension, to her.

At one point the Arkansas Department of Health offered a way to "resolve the issues presented by your case." That solution was to list *one* father on the amended birth certificate and leave the "mother" line blank. It may have been their solution, but it was not our solution. We both wanted to be on the birth certificate. To do anything else would be to cave into their discrimination.

Our Arkansas lawyer called to say she had discovered a lawyer in Portland, Oregon, who had a similar petition for a same-sex couple. He pursued, pushed, pushed, and petitioned over and over until, finally, the Arkansas Department of Health relented and issued an amended birth certificate to the same-sex couple.

"I'll contact him and follow his strategy," she said.

On February 13, a year later, the lawyer's assistant called me.

"Davidson, this is Mona. I have the amended birth certificate in my hand. How would you like to get it?"

"Yes. Please send it overnight."

It arrived on Valentine's Day.

On the amended birth certificate, on the line where it says "mother," Davidson Lloyd is printed there and on the line that says "father," Tom Keegan's name is printed there. Over the years I have said to our daughter, "I'm your mother." She acknowledges it, both as a kind of joke and as a kind of truth.

When she was a baby, we both carried a copy of the birth certificate on our person. There are stories of same-sex couples, primarily gay fathers, being stopped by police or customs agents and the child(ren) taken away because the men couldn't fully prove the child(ren) were part of their family. Never would we be in a situation where there was any question about who her parents were.

When she began to talk, we prompted her on what to say if an official-looking person started to question her. Be polite and say: "I'm adopted, and these are my dads." Now that she is older, she is quite capable of speaking for herself.

Coming back into America from Canada, we were stopped at the border. The border guard looked at her in the back seat and said, "Where's the mother?" Tom and I looked at each other.

"She's adopted and we're her gay dads," Tom said.

"Oh, can you prove it?" the guard challenged. I quickly whipped out her birth certificate. He looked at it, passed it back and let us back into *our* country, two American dads and their American child, Connor Keegan-Lloyd. ▼

Davidson Lloyd (he/him), is a writer, performer and administrator. He holds a BA in Theater from Pace University and MA in Performance/Theatre from Antioch College. As a performer, Davidson has appeared on and Off-Broadway. With his spouse, Tom Keegan (Keegan & Lloyd), he created 21 performance theatre works touring throughout the US and Europe, as part of the vanguard of gay men championing same-sex marriage and parenting. As the former Director of Financial Assistance for the SAG-AFTRA Foundation, Davidson provided financial assistance and scholarships for SAG-AFTRA actors and their families. Together since 1977, Davidson and Tom currently reside in Los Angeles.

Photos courtesy of Davidson Lloyd

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