

# Arlington Family Connection

supporting children age six and under and those who care for them



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www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org



## Five Ways to Make Arlington Safer for Food-Allergic Children

By Gillian Epstein

One routine Saturday afternoon at home with our eight-month-old son, Jacob, our family went through a nightmare. Just minutes after consuming a small amount of dairy, Jake's face swelled, he broke out in huge hives all over his body, and he was gasping for breath. My husband called 911. The EMT saved Jake's life by giving him a shot of epinephrine. In the emergency room later that day, doctors informed us that Jacob was one of a growing number of children with a life-threatening food allergy. There is no history of food allergy in our family, Jake had only breast milk during his first six months of life, and we did not introduce solid foods until he was seven months old. In short, we did not see this coming.

In case you think my son's condition is an anomaly, take a look at these allergy facts from the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network:

- Food allergies are a common childhood disorder, affecting up to 8% of children younger than age 3. (Approximately 1 of every 12 young children.)
- Eight foods account for 90% of allergic reactions. These foods are peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, pecans, etc.), fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, soy, and wheat.
- There is no cure for this potentially life-threatening

affliction, and strict avoidance of the offending allergen is the only way to prevent a reaction.

- Food allergies have increased 55% in the last 5 years.
- Food allergy reactions account for 30,000 trips to the emergency room and 150-200 deaths per year in the United States.

Subsequent allergy testing showed that in addition to being allergic to dairy, Jacob was allergic to wheat, peanut, and eggs, even though he had never eaten any of these foods. We were given a junior-sized EpiPen<sup>®</sup> and told that the only way to protect our child from going into shock again (and potentially dying) was to make sure that he never consumed even a crumb of these foods. We also learned that Jake might eventually outgrow some of his allergies, and that his chances of doing so would be greatly increased if he could successfully avoid future allergic reactions.

The day I realized I couldn't keep Jacob safe by sheer will power and vigilance, I was at a sing-a-long in the library. Looking through the eyes of the "pre-allergy attack" me, I used to see what you see: a room full of kids at varied stages of interest listening to music, munching snacks, and sipping from bottles and cups. Looking through new eyes, I saw danger: a toddler running toward my son with a sippy cup that had milk slopping out of the spout; cheerios rolling across the carpet in every direction; sprays of cheesy goldfish crumbs dusting the chairs. When I saw a mother handing tiny

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## Mom and Baby Yoga

By Abby Subak

In those months after having my first baby, I became very aware of how my life priorities were changing. I wanted to stay connected to friends, learn from other moms, find some "me" time, get out of the house, and to lose some of those pregnancy pounds - or at least get to know and feel good about my new body. Yet I also didn't want to sacrifice one minute with

my new baby.

That is when I discovered Mom and Baby Yoga, an activity that I am now finding just as enjoyable with my second baby and recommend to anyone who needs a mental and physical change of pace during those first months.

A typical mom and baby yoga class is partially mom practicing yoga positions while her baby lies nearby or is in her arms and a partially a baby massage. Some classes also include additional aspects of yoga prac-

tice like breathing exercises or relaxation. Although all of my classes have consisted of moms, I am sure that dads or other caregivers would be more than welcome.

The key difference between Mom and Baby Yoga and other yoga classes is that babies — and whatever it takes to care for them — are welcome. The fussing and cooing from the babies and the bottles, breastfeeding, bouncing, and pacing from

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## News from the AFC Steering Committee

We would like to introduce our energetic **new Website volunteer** and Steering Committee member, Karen Donovan. She has been very busy updating our site, [www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](http://www.arlingtonfamilyconnection.org), and invites you to check it out! It is now updated on a regular basis with new events and volunteer opportunities, as well as helpful resources. Recent additions include our **newest resource pages**:

- Clothing for Kids
- Food Delivery
- Reading List for Gay and Lesbian Parents
- Reading List for Raising Daughters
- School Committee in Arlington and How it Works
- Support Groups for Gay and Lesbian Parents

We welcome any suggestions on the website and its content. We continue to expand its content with information useful to our members. Feel free to email Karen at [webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org).

This newsletter comes to you from the desktop of **new volunteer, editor & publisher** Charlotte Pierce, co-editor with Robin Schoenthaler of *The Compleat Day Tripper* ([www.piercepress.com](http://www.piercepress.com)). Charlotte and Jen Goebel will collaborate and/or alternate in producing the newsletter from now on.

At our last Steering Committee meeting, Wendy Clarke officially agreed to be **AFC's Clerk**. (If you come to a meeting, she is the one with the laptop taking notes.)

Wendy is also re-starting the **Working Moms Group**, which was supposed to have its kick-off meeting this month until a

## Join the AFC Steering Committee!

For more information about AFC, please contact any of the following Steering Committee members or join us at our next meeting, Wednesday, February 4, at 8 pm. Contact anyone below for the meeting's location. All Steering Meetings are open and AFC members are encouraged to attend. We will be planning future events and discussing issues of interest to Arlington families. If you would like to get more involved with AFC, or if you have a special interest you would like to see us pursue, please come to a meeting!

### Wendy Clarke, Clerk

Tel 781-648-2341  
[workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:workingmoms@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)

### Karen Donovan, Webmaster

Tel 781-777-1011  
[webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:webmaster@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)

### Justine Lynch, Treasurer

Tel 781-648-0006  
[treasurer@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:treasurer@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)

### Charlotte Pierce, Newsletter

Tel 800-879-5693  
[newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)

### Ruth Schmidt, Outings & Membership

Tel 781-643-2362  
[outings@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:outings@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)  
[membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)

broken pipe at the Robbins Library forced them to cancel our reservation in the Community Room. When a new meeting place and time are set, we will update everyone via email. If you do not have email and would like to be kept informed about the Working Moms Group, please call Wendy at 781-648-2341.

The first **Mom's Movie Night** on Jan. 13 was a resounding success, with 11 members meeting up at Flora after attending either of two movies at the Capitol Theatre or a lecture at the Leslie Ellis School. This is intended to be a regular monthly gathering, thanks to Janet Gascoigne and Judy Petrie, our organizers.

Our trip to the **Discovery Museum** on Jan. 21 was also a big hit, as 21 families enjoyed an intimate AFC-only visit. Afterwards, several of us headed to O'Naturals for lunch, where the kids enjoyed the train table and dollhouse and everyone enjoyed the tasty food.

On Jan. 20 roughly 90 people gathered to hear Jeff Drake describe "**The Four Keys to Effective Discipline**". We would like to thank Jeff for being so generous with his time and for doing the bulk of the work in organizing and publicizing this informative workshop.

The **e-Bulletin Board** is a new feature for members. Once a week, a collection of postings from members are compiled and sent out to everyone on our email list. Appropriate postings include:

- Requests to connect with other parents with something in common – either to form a support network or to do something fun
- Nanny or babysitter searches
- Information you would like to share with members (web sites, a fun place to go with kids, recipes, etc.)
- Items you want to sell or buy (preferably related to children)
- Requests to help you compile information that will benefit other members

This is not a discussion list. If you are not receiving the e-Bulletin Board and would like to, we probably don't have your email address. Please send your request to: [membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org). If you do not have email but would like to have an item added to the bulletin board, please call Ruth at 781-643-2362.

**Membership update:** As of this writing, AFC is 318 members-strong! Of these members, 93% have email, and 28% are receiving the newsletter via email alone. (We would like to especially thank those members, who are helping us to save a substantial amount of money on printing and postage each month.)

If you have any friends or colleagues who you think may enjoy the many benefits that AFC has to offer to its members, now's the time to join because a **½-year membership from now through August is a bargain at only \$10**. Thanks for spreading the word!

Finally, we'd like to remind all of you that AFC exists because of a very small and dedicated group of **volunteers**. We encourage you to get involved in any way that you can – we need your ideas as well as people to act on them. Please contact any of the people on the Steering Committee if you would like to help, and please come to one of our meetings!

— by Ruth Schmidt, AFC Coordinator



squares of a peanut butter sandwich to her roaming toddler, I knew it was time to ask Arlington parents to help.

I believe Jake and the increasing number of young children like him deserve to attend sing-a-longs, story hours, organized playgroups, play spaces, and school without risking their lives. However, these places and events become safer only when *every* parent takes responsibility - not just the parents of allergic children. No one wants the snack they feed their child to be the snack that sends someone else's child to the emergency room. As a community, we can help prevent the serious injury or death of a child by taking five simple steps:

1. **Take "no food" policies seriously.** The Robbins Library and the Fox Library have a "no food in the library" policy. This means no snacks or sippy cups at any event or room in the library, or in the toy areas. Belmont KidSpace does not allow any food in their gym area.
2. **Take "no peanut" policies seriously.** The Belmont KidSpace and the Arlington Family Connection have just instituted "no peanut" policies in order to keep kids safer at their gatherings. Peanut is an especially tricky allergy because just a trace of peanut left on a toy, book, etc. can cause a life-threatening allergic reaction.
3. **Bring fruits and vegetables.** If you are in a place with young children that allows snacks, or if nothing in the world will stop you from cheating on "no snack" rules, consider bringing fruits and vegetables. As I mentioned earlier, only eight foods account for ninety percent of allergic reactions. That means if you bring a sippy cup filled with juice or water (instead of milk or soy milk) and a snack of fruits or vegetables (instead of cereal or goldfish), food-allergic children will be *ninety percent* safer. Consider bringing dried fruits (like raisins) as a convenient portable snack. If you're feeding a baby a bottle of formula in a space with other children, be careful to immediately wipe up any spills and to make sure the bottle is capped and put safely away when not in use.
4. **Clean your child after snacks and meals.** Research shows that food residue on a person's lips or hands can cause allergic reactions for hours after the food was actually consumed. That means if your child ate peanut butter, ice cream, etc. at home and did not wash face and hands, any object that child touches or mouths later in the day could potentially cause harm to an allergic child who comes in contact with it. Consider carrying wipes with you for easy cleaning of face and hands when on the go with your child.
5. **Be sensitive to the risks faced by children with food allergies.** Consider looking at the world through the eyes of families dealing with food allergies. Seemingly straightforward activities like attending a birthday party, going out to eat, playing at the library, or going to preschool become fraught with all-too-real fears and difficulties. When you keep an open mind, follow the steps above, and ask other parents to follow them, you ease the burden our children carry—thank you!

I know that a few people only focus on the difficulty of change. An organizer of a local playgroup told me that Jacob should play somewhere else. I've heard librarians say they

encounter parents who just won't listen when asked to follow the library's no-snack policy. I believe these people are the exception, and that the rest of us would willingly change our habits to safely include children with diverse needs—in fact, I've noticed a wonderful change at the library since the librarians have posted more overt signs about their "no food" policy. Please join me in practicing snack safety, pass this article on to other parents, and spread the word in your daycares, preschools, playgroups, parks, and libraries. Let's make Arlington a safer and more compassionate place for all our children.

Want to get more involved? Consider the following: We need to work to ensure that other children's groups and organizations in Arlington follow the admirable lead of the AFC and KidSpace. For example, Arlington Public Schools currently lack a consistent food allergy emergency and prevention policy across our seven Elementary schools. (In contrast to neighboring school systems like Lexington and Belmont). Encouragingly, a task force of concerned parents and school nurses are currently working in cooperation with the school committee to make Arlington's food-allergic school children safer.

I and other Arlington parents of allergic children invite you to:

- Join our newly forming playgroup/informal support and networking group for Arlington families with food-allergic children aged 0-6. For more information, contact [gillianepstein@yahoo.com](mailto:gillianepstein@yahoo.com) or call (781) 643-5135.
- Learn more! For in-depth answers to questions about food allergies, visit the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network at [www.foodallergy.org](http://www.foodallergy.org).
- Join the network of parents working to implement a food allergy policy in Arlington Public Schools. To become part of this group, go to: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/arlingtonfoodallergies/> and click "Join this Group."

*Gillian Epstein works as an educational consultant in Massachusetts and New Hampshire public schools, and teaches in local universities. She lives in Arlington with her husband, Jeremy, and their son, Jacob.*

## Editorial Policy

The **Arlington Family Connection** (AFC) newsletter is published monthly and is free with membership. Published articles reflect the views of the respective authors and do not necessarily represent the views of AFC. Childcare, healthcare and legal information is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended as a substitute for medical or professional advice. Always consult your own healthcare provider for any decisions relating to your child's well-being. Copyright remains with the individual author for bylined articles. All other materials are copyright Arlington Family Connection, 2004. Permission is granted to reproduce articles for which copyright is held by AFC provided appropriate credit is given and no fee is charged. The AFC newsletter accepts submissions from AFC members on issues relevant to families with children six and under. The editorial board reserves the right to refuse submissions for any reason. Send editorial submissions to: [newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org); calendar listings to [calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org).

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# Bye-Bye, Barbie and Bob

By *Melissa Lucius*



Recently, I was shopping for a kid-size umbrella for Amanda, my 3-year-old. There were plenty to choose from, but I ended up leaving the store without buying one. That's because the only umbrellas to choose from were emblazoned with Barbie, Sponge Bob,

Mickey, Bob the Builder and Blues Clues. (I later found a really cute doggie umbrella at Michelson's in Lexington, with floppy ears and everything.) I'm a little concerned about the proliferation of branded merchandise for kids these days. I thought I'd share a few reasons why I prefer the generic stuff.

## The "Gimme" Effect

First, when a kid plays with a Mickey Mouse doll, then recognizes Mickey's face on a t-shirt/lunchbox/tricycle, they are immediately drawn to it. We are all drawn to what's familiar. They clamor for that t-shirt/lunchbox/tricycle, and maybe we get it for them. And then suddenly, what started out as one toy turns into a collection -- and we feel compelled to fill in the blanks so that we have a complete set.

When you've got the t-shirt and the lunchbox, you want to round out the collection with all the related merchandise out there, and the merchandise that's yet to be produced. The child no longer enjoys that doll for what it is, but sees it as one of many in the collection, which is ever-expanding. However, most kids already have plenty of toys, and in my opinion, this encourages materialism. It also has a negative impact on the environment, since it uses up the earth's precious resources. Conversely, having fewer toys encourages appreciation. Fewer toys also means fewer resources used.

## The Never-Ending Ad

Second, whenever you buy a t-shirt/lunchbox/tricycle emblazoned with a big-company logo like Disney or Coke, or with a character like Barbie or SpongeBob, your dollars go towards helping that company advertise. First of all, these big companies don't need any help advertising: their name is already everywhere. More advertising will just make it that much easier for these companies to get their vending machines into our schools, and to crowd out the little guy toy companies in the toy store. It will be a sad day when only the biggest toy manufacturers are left, leaving us with only logo-covered toys to choose from.

## Conformity vs. Creativity

And last but not least, these logo toys inspire conformity over creativity. These mega-companies are providing a pre-packaged script for kids, and Bob the Builder has to act just like on TV. Collecting character toys lays the groundwork for brand-consciousness, which in only a few short years, may morph into collecting the latest Tommy Hilfiger fashion in order to fit in with the crowd. Generic toys are flexible, and leave room for the child to create his or her own story.

This is especially important now, when their creativity and imagination are in full bloom.

Just because these kinds of character toys take up so much shelf space in the store doesn't mean they're the only ones out there. You have to search a bit to find what's best for your children. I did, and I'm still happy with the doggie umbrella!

*Melissa Lucius has two daughters and is a project manager at a software consulting company. Please send any feedback you have to [mrlucius@netzero.net](mailto:mrlucius@netzero.net).*

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( *Yoga, continued from page 1* )



the moms certainly disrupt the usual focused calm of most "non-baby" yoga classes, but gentle chaos can offer many benefits.

Mom and baby yoga has helped me physically. I stretch out my aching muscles, counteract the "breastfeeding shoulder hunch," and generally get my blood moving. It has also provided great emotional support. The camaraderie and friendship with other moms going through the same newborn joys and struggles is invaluable.

For me, one of the greatest—and least anticipated—pleasures of the class is the time to have a special connection with my baby. We look at each other and coo as I massage her chubby legs and arms, she watches and goes while I stretch my arms overhead. In fact, the day that she slept through the entire class—I didn't dare wake her up, I found myself really missing that time together (but still not enough to wake her up!).

Mom and baby yoga classes are usually open to everyone, no matter how much or how little yoga experience you have had. As always, make sure your doctor is okay with the activity, but some classes welcome moms with babies as young as 3 weeks. Older babies are welcome too, although some classes ask that you stop attending once the baby starts crawling. I know at least one yoga center offers Mom and Crawling Baby yoga (Living Yoga in Watertown).

Although prenatal yoga can be found at most yoga studios, Mom and Baby is still a little harder to find. Below is a list of a few of the yoga studios in the Arlington area that offer Mom and Baby classes (this is just a list, not an endorsement, and not necessarily comprehensive). If you are still hesitant, I encourage you to call and talk to the instructors or to attend one class until you find one that is a good fit for you.

- **Living Yoga:** 613 Mt. Auburn St, Watertown, 617-924-6085, [www.livingyogactr.org](http://www.livingyogactr.org), [livingyogactr@yahoo.com](mailto:livingyogactr@yahoo.com).
- **Mystic River Yoga:** 196 Boston Ave, Suite 3900, Medford, 781-396-0808, [www.mysticriveryoga.com](http://www.mysticriveryoga.com); [info@MysticRiverYoga.com](mailto:info@MysticRiverYoga.com)
- **Yoga Mandala:** 6 Mt. Vernon St, Winchester, 781-368-9339, [www.yogamandala.com](http://www.yogamandala.com); [info@yogamandala.com](mailto:info@yogamandala.com).
- **Arlington Center:** Even though the Center does not offer Mom and Baby yoga, it does have yoga classes for parents and older kids — and it is right here in our own backyard! The address is 369 Mass Ave, 781-316-0282; [www.arlingtoncenter.org](http://www.arlingtoncenter.org).

# Community Supported Agriculture Works Wonders!

By Saskia Oosting



Do you enjoy eating a wide variety of vegetables, and think it is important that your food is grown locally in an environmentally responsible manner? Perhaps being a shareholder for a community supported agriculture (CSA) farm is for you. The concept behind a CSA is that you pay the farmer up front so he or she has the capital to buy seed and equipment, and grow

the vegetables. You as a shareholder in turn receive a share of vegetables that are freshly harvested the day you pick them up, and may include varieties not be available in grocery stores, such as heirloom tomatoes, and Asian greens.

I was introduced to the wonders of CSAs one day last winter, when I read in some fancy magazine at my mother-in-law's that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) website included an inventory of CSA's by state ([www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/csastate.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/csa/csastate.htm)). Here you could browse and pick a farm that suited your needs and geography. I found several farms served the Arlington area, even farms that were from the western part of Massachusetts.

## How It Works

I contacted the Waltham Fields Community Farm (WFCF) in Waltham because I was intrigued by the concept of being able to visit the farm, see where the food was grown and perhaps even participate in the cultivation. Shares were still

available and I quickly signed up to become a member, despite being due to have my second child sometime during the beginning of August. I was concerned that I would not have time to cook with two little ones in the house. However, I was so excited about getting locally-grown vegetables from the farm that I even dreamt about it!

The season started June 6, and lasted 21 weeks. Some weeks the share was manageable in size (read: we actually ate all the vegetables before the next share arrived), while other weeks I felt like I needed a course in canning to use all the vegetables we received. At WFCF, many shareholders split a share with another person or family. Initially, I thought about splitting my share, but I figured I could always give away vegetables if I had too many. That was indeed the case as not a week went by where I did not give away some vegetables. This was mostly due to the sheer volume of produce, but other times because we received some vegetables I personally do not like to eat (e.g., radishes, turnips).

## Education for Kids & Adults

What also makes WFCF special is that it strives to educate adults and children about how food is produced. Children and adults learn about plants, food production and farming when they come to WFCF to work in the fields and greenhouse. Guided by experienced staff, they sow seeds, transplant seedlings, weed and harvest crops. A large amount of the labor at the farm is done by volunteers. Some volunteers are shareholders, but others include students from area colleges and schools. I saw many other families with small children volunteering time, and then picking up their share. My own 2-year old son really enjoyed coming to the farm and helping me with the pick-your-own cherry tomatoes, beans, and snow peas, not to mention an opportunity to see a working tractor!

## Challenges & Rewards

A CSA may be right for you if you enjoy the challenge of receiving new and different types of vegetables, and a learning to cook with them. Some people take the opportunity to make new dishes that feature these vegetables, while I often found many tried and true recipes such as stews can easily be adapted by substituting the new vegetables for the ones in the recipe. If you are interested in becoming a shareholder at a CSA in 2004, contact them as early in the year as possible. Shares often sell out by the end of February.

One challenge is you don't know the contents of your share until you fetch it. If you enjoy your vegetables but cannot see yourself committing to 21 weeks of unknown share contents, you can always visit the Arlington Farmers Market. It operates on Wednesday afternoons from June through October and hosts about a half dozen local farmers selling produce with similar quality and variety as that you can receive as a shareholder.

*Saskia Oosting has two sons, is vice president of Community Farm Outreach, the organization overseeing the Waltham Fields Community Farm, and is a scientist at an environmental consulting company in Winchester. Email: [soosting@yahoo.com](mailto:soosting@yahoo.com). For further information on the Waltham Fields Community Farm visit [www.communityfarms.org](http://www.communityfarms.org).*

Kindergarten Registration & Orientation for Sept. 2004		
School	Registration	Orientation
Bishop	March 4 8:30 – 11:00 a.m.	February 5 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Brackett	March 2 12:15 – 2:15	April 15 2:15 p.m. (families Invited)
Dallin	February 11 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.	April 8 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Hardy	February 5 6:30 p.m. Snow date February 11	February 5 6:30 p.m. Snow date February 11
Peirce	March 3 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.	February 4 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
Stratton	February 26 <sup>th</sup> 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.	February 26 <sup>th</sup> 8:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Thompson	March 4 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. March 5 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	March 4 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

For more information on kindergarten in Arlington, see <http://www.arlington.k12.ma.us/kindergarten> or call 781-316-3795.

# Calendar

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## Special Events for Families

### Introduction to the Orchestra

Sunday Feb. 8, 2 pm and 4 pm. Longy School of Music Family Series. Edward M. Pickman Concert Hall, 27 Garden St., Cambridge. Tickets \$5, available in advance by calling 617-876-0956, x500. Performance highlights all the instruments of the orchestra. Members of the orchestra will be available to showcase their instruments during a post-concert 'instrument zoo'. For ages 4 and up. For more details, see: [www.longy.edu](http://www.longy.edu).

### Tot Valentine's Day Party

Wed. Feb. 11, 10:30-11:30 am. Arlington Boys and Girls Club, 781-648-1617.

### Daddy/Daughter Dance

Friday Feb. 13, 6:30-8:30 pm (snow date Feb. 14). Gibbs Gym, Foster St. Social for girls of all ages with fathers, grandfathers, or other adult males. \$5 per person. Info: Arlington Rec. Dept., 781-316-3880.

### World's Fair for Kids

Feb. 14-16, 9 am-6 pm. World Trade Center, Boston. Tickets \$12 adults, \$8 ages 3-13. A fun-filled interactive exposition featuring 8 hands-on action-oriented themed pavilions focusing on technology, sports, play, arts, travel, nutrition, fashion and health & safety. Includes games, favorite characters, a petting zoo, face painting, and lots more. Visit: [www.wfkids.com/boston](http://www.wfkids.com/boston).

### Children's Winter Concert-Rick Goldin

Monday Feb. 16, 10:30 am. Church of Our Redeemer, 6 Meriam St., Lexington, 02420. Lexington Playcare Center presents an interactive performance of children's songs. Tickets \$6 at door, or in advance starting Jan. 26 by sending a check to LPC (same address as church). Proceeds go to the LPC scholarship fund. Info: [pamela.tames@verizon.net](mailto:pamela.tames@verizon.net).

### Winter Carnival

Thursday Feb. 19, 1-3 pm (snow date Feb. 20). AHS Toz Gym. Games, prizes, moonwalks, refreshments and fun for youngsters of all ages. Free admission, purchase tickets for activities. Info: Arlington Rec. Dept., 781-316-3880.

### ACT Play: "What, Meatloaf Again?"

Sat. Feb. 21, 2:00 pm for ages 5 and up. Baptist Church - basement, 819 Mass. Ave. Free, donations accepted. For info about this and other children's workshops and performances, call Steve at 781-721-2176 or visit <http://act.arlington.ma.us>.

### Puppet Show: "Moccasin Stew"

Sat. Feb. 28, 1:00 pm for ages 3-10 at Fox Library. Presented by the Magpie Puppets. Space is limited, tickets will be given out at

Robbins Library beginning Mon. Feb. 23. Free. 781-316-3234.

### Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra Family Concert.

Sunday Feb. 29, 3-4 pm, Town Hall. All ages concert brought to you by the letter "B": Music by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Bizet, Borodin and Berlioz. Opportunity afterwards to visit with the musicians and try out some of the instruments. Free, a Russell Fund program. [www.psarlington.org](http://www.psarlington.org)

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## Vacation Week at the Library

### Saturday Feb. 14: Valentine Crafts

Drop-in 10am-2pm at Robbins Library. For all ages, but children need to be about 6 to make "Ladybug tic-tac-toe" or "Love card" on their own.

### Tuesday Feb. 17: Play Morning

Drop-in 9:30am-12noon at Robbins Library. As there will be no Sing-along, they will put out a bigger selection of toys for children age 18 months and up.

### Wednesday Feb. 18: Puzzle Day

Drop-in all day at Robbins Library. Young children can come and use lots of new puzzles.

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## Vacation Week at NHM

### National Heritage Museum

33 Marrett Rd (Rt. 2A), Lexington  
781-861-6559; [www.monh.org](http://www.monh.org)

### Saturday Feb. 14: Sing-Along

2:00 pm. Sing and clap along with award-winning folksinger Ben Tousley and delight in his combination of classic stories and new songs. \$8/adult, \$6 child.

### Monday Feb. 16: Colonial Clothing Demonstration.

1-4 pm. Find out what colonial men and women wore. Free.

### Tuesday Feb. 17: Wild and Woolly.

1-3 pm. Come learn how to spin wool into yarn and learn some basics of weaving. Free.

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## Sing-Alongs

**Mondays.** Finagle a Bagel in Burlington, 91 Middlesex Turnpike, 5:30-6:30 pm. Ed Morgan performs a selection of fun original and classic children's songs. Free. 781-273-6500, [www.finagleabagel.com](http://www.finagleabagel.com).

### Tuesday Feb. 3 & 10. \* Fox Library:

10-10:30 am. Songs and singing games for ages 0-3 with Liz Buchanan or Sulinha. Space limited, tickets are distributed beginning 9 am day of event. Call 781-316-3198 or visit [www.robbinslibrary.org](http://www.robbinslibrary.org). (\*Robbins Community room damaged by water leak, temporary schedule change.)

### Second and fourth Friday of the month.

Sing-along with Diane Taraz. 10-10:30am, Calvary United Methodist Church, 300 Mass Ave, \$1. Info [www.dianetaraz.com](http://www.dianetaraz.com).

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## Storytimes

### Mondays, Feb. 2 & 9

Toddlers at Robbins Library, 10:30-11:30am. Drop-in for children ages 18 mo. to 3 yrs with an adult. Stories, rhymes and finger-plays for first 15 min., followed by play, a simple craft, and socializing.

### Tuesdays, Feb. 24 & March 2

Drop-in stories at Fox Library for 3-5 yr. olds at 10:00 am. Feb. 24 - "Let it Snow"; Mar. 2 - "Hat Day" (wear your favorite or funniest hat). 781-316-3198

### Wednesdays, Feb. 4 & 11

Preschoolers at Robbins Library, 10:30-11 am. Drop-in for ages 3-5 with an adult or alone, but adult must remain close by in the library. Longer stories, rhymes, games and fingerplays. 781-316-3234

### Thursdays, Feb. 12, 19 & 26

Lap-sit program at Fox Library, 10 am. Drop-in for babies and up to age 2 1/2 with an adult. A brief story and lap game followed by play and socializing.

### Thursdays

Henry Bears' Park, 11 am, Free. 685 Mass Ave., Arl. 781-646-9400

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## Other Fun Stuff

### Toddlers and Twos

Drop-in, indoor gym time sponsored by the Arlington Recreation Dept. Wed. and Fri. 9:30-11 am., Gibbs School gym. Ages 15 mos.-3 yrs, \$3 per day. Will not meet on Feb. 18 or 20. Info: 781-316-3880.

### Parent and Tot Connection

Hosted by the Arlington Boys and Girls Club, Fridays 9:30-11 am. Drop-in playgroup for toddlers and preschoolers with caregiver. Consists of age-appropriate play activities, crafts, stories and music. Free, supported by a grant to Community Partnerships for Children. Info: 781-648-1617.

### Puddlestompers Monday Playgroup

Drop-in preschool playgroup, Mon. 10:30 am-12:30 pm. Meets in the Fox Library Community Room in the winter (\$1/ family contribution for use of room); and outside when the weather is nice. To join group's email list, contact: [JulieLucey@comcast.net](mailto:JulieLucey@comcast.net) or call 781-641-0944.

### Capitol Theater Movies for caregivers with babies.

Mondays, new movie chosen weekly

(Continued on page 7)

# AFC Membership/Renewal Form



**New Member**    **Renewal**   **Date:**

**Names:**

**Address, Zip:**

**E-mail:**

**Phone:**

**Please list your children:**

Name                      Gender                      Date of Birth

**I am a:**

Parent       Grandparent       Health Care Provider  
 Educator       Child Care Provider       Other

**I am:**

Stay-at-home Parent       Employed full-time  
 Employed Part-time       Other

**Newsletter Delivery Preference:**

US Mail    E-mail    Both

**School District** (for geographic location):

Bishop    Brackett    Dallin    Hardy  
 Peirce    Stratton    Thompson    Other

**Areas of Interest:**

Events/Parties       New Parent Outreach       Newsletter  
 Outings w/ Kids       Outings w/o Kids       Seminars  
 Playgroups       Web site       Other:

**Membership Fees:** *All memberships renew in September.*

One-year membership \$20 (joining July-January)  
 Mid-year membership \$10 (joining Feb-June)

Please make check payable to "Arlington Family Connection" and mail it with this form to:

Arlington Family Connection, PO Box 150, Arlington, MA 02476

*For information or questions, contact Ruth Schmidt at (781) 643-2362 or [membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:membership@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)*

*(Calendar, continued from page 6)*

starting between 1-2 pm, \$4.50/ adult. Nursing, bottle feeding, fussing, and changing diapers is strongly encouraged and never frowned upon! 204 Mass Ave., Arlington. To join the email list send an email to [BabyFriendlyMovies-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:BabyFriendlyMovies-subscribe@yahoo.com). Info: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BabyFriendlyMovies>.

## Public Skating

422 Summer Street, Veteran's Memorial Sports Center. \$2 children, \$4 adults. Fridays: 11 am-1 pm, 2:30-4:45 pm, 7-9 pm. Sundays: 9:30-11:30 am, 2-4 pm. \*Special public skate Mon.Feb.16, 10 am-12 noon. Info: 781-316-3880.

## Regent Theatre

The Regent (7 Medford St.) offers great family programs most Saturday mornings from 10:30-11:30 am. \$5 for kids & seniors, \$7 adults. Tickets available at the door starting at 9:30 am, or in advance the week before at Henry Bear's Park.

- Feb. 7: Davey the Clown
- Feb. 14: Gunnar Madsen (funny singer)
- Feb. 21: Peter & Ellen (kids' music)
- Feb. 28: Cirque du Jour (clowns)
- Mar. 6: Margot Fox (family folk music)
- Mar. 13: The Lucky Show (magic)

Please call 781-646-4849 or visit [www.regenttheatre.com/events/family\\_fun.htm](http://www.regenttheatre.com/events/family_fun.htm) for more information.

## Beyond Arlington

### Babes in the Woods

Strolls and hikes through the Medford Fells every Tuesday, 10-11:30 am. Free. For maps, schedules or info call 781-396-8994 or visit [www.fells.org/babes.html](http://www.fells.org/babes.html).

## Belmont KidSpace

Indoor play space for ages 5 and under. \$30 family season pass or \$3/day. 365 Belmont Street, Belmont. Hours: Mon & Thurs 1-5 pm; Fri 5-8 pm; Sat 9 am-12 noon; 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays 2-5 pm; 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday 2-5 pm for special-needs families. For info call 617-484-8697 or visit [www.belmontkidspace.org](http://www.belmontkidspace.org).

## Winter Walks for Kids at Gore Place

52 Gore St., Waltham, through March 13. Mon-Fri 10am-3pm; Sat. 2/21, 2/28, 3/6, 3/13 only, 12noon-3pm. Explore the open spaces and hidden places on the 45-acre estate. Clad with rented activity backpacks and snowshoes, children (ages 3-9) and their accompanying adults can search for animal tracks, identify trees without leaves, play a scavenger-hunt game and visit the animals at the farm. *Ring the bell at the mansion to begin your adventure.* One-hour rental fees: \$5 for backpack plus child's snowshoes, \$4-5 each add'l pair of snowshoes. Reservations recommended, call 781-894-2794. [www.goreplace.org](http://www.goreplace.org).

## Seminars and Open Houses

**Basic Rights**, part of the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SpedPAC) workshop series. Thurs. Feb. 5, 7-9 pm, Brackett School, 66 Eastern Ave. Free. Get an overview of the special education process, procedural timelines, determining eligibility, developing the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and what's involved in due process. Presented by Federation for Children with Special Needs ([www.fcsn.org](http://www.fcsn.org)). Contact Trish if you plan to attend or wish to join the SpedPAC e-list: 781-641-0182 or [t\\_orlovsky@hotmail.com](mailto:t_orlovsky@hotmail.com).

**Playful Parenting Seminar.** Wed. Feb. 11, 7:30-9 pm. Buckman Tavern, Lexington, followed by dessert at the Copa Café. Sponsored by the LPPTA. \$10 per person, reserved/paid in advance. Contact Suzie Byers at 781-863-5863 or [suzie\\_byers@hotmail.com](mailto:suzie_byers@hotmail.com).

**The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness: Five Steps to Help Kids Create and Sustain Lifelong Joy.** Thurs. March 3, 7-9 pm, Ottoson Middle School. For parents of students in Grades K-12. Author and psychiatrist Ned Hallowell, M.D. presents the basic ingredients for the kind of a childhood that will most likely lead to a happy and satisfying adulthood, from his book of the same title. A Parent Education Forum sponsored and funded by the Arlington Public Schools Health Education Dept. and others. Free, but donations are accepted. More info: 781-316-3570.

## Benefits

### Kans for Kids

Sat. Feb 7, 10 am -1 pm. Donate clean returnable bottles and cans to benefit Arlington Recreation's Youth Activities. Gibbs School on Tufts St. 781-316-3880.



**"Sunshine in the Evening"**, auction fundraiser to benefit Sunshine Nursery School. Friday March 5, 7-11 pm at Sons of Italy, 19 Prentiss Rd. Hors d'oeuvre, cash bar, desserts, and DJ. \$15 per person, \$25 per couple. For more details call the school at 781-646-1630.

Arlington Family Connection  
PO Box 150  
Arlington, MA 02476

**Kindergarten Registration  
Alert . . . see page 5**

## Save the Dates!

### Wednesday, Feb. 4

#### AFC Steering Committee Meeting

8 pm. Open to all members. For the meeting's location, contact Ruth Schmidt at 781-643-2362 or [info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:info@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org)

### Thursday, Feb. 5

#### AFC Book Club

Meets first Thursday of every month. New members always welcome. Info: Nancy Flynn-Barvick at [barvick@comcast.net](mailto:barvick@comcast.net). This month's book is *The Russian Debutante's Handbook* by Gary Shteyngart.

### Tuesday, Feb. 10 and

### Tuesday, March 16

#### AFC Mom's Movie Night

Join us for a movie at the Capitol Theater (7 pm-ish), followed by dessert and discussion at Flora. An e-mail will be sent the week prior announcing the movie title, time, and other details. No reservations needed. For more info contact [jpetrie@xensei.com](mailto:jpetrie@xensei.com) or [jbgascoigne@rcn.com](mailto:jbgascoigne@rcn.com), or call 781-643-4842 (Janet).

### Tuesday, March 9

#### AFC Seminar:

#### Coping With Food Allergies

7:30-9 pm at the Arlington Senior Center, 21 Maple St. (behind Town Hall). Curious about Food Allergies? Do you have a family member with a serious food allergy? Does your child have friends with food allergies? Speaker Theresa Normile, R.N., is a 12-year veteran in maternal-child health at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the founder of Food Allergy Counseling and Teaching Services; she is also the mother of a child with life-threatening food allergies. Theresa will provide useful information and answer questions about how to read food labels to identify common allergens, how to take a child with food allergies out to a restaurant, and how to create a safe environment for a play date. You will also learn how to identify the symptoms of an allergic reaction, and what to do if one occurs. Free, but space is limited so please pre-register by contacting Catherine Murphy at 781-641-1559 or [cgmurphy7@yahoo.com](mailto:cgmurphy7@yahoo.com).



### AFC Volunteers Are Needed to ...

#### ... Help Plan AFC Outings

Contact Ruth at [outings@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:outings@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org) or at 781-643-2362.

#### .... Join the Newsletter Team, Submit Articles

Send articles or calendar listings to [newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:newsletter@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org) or [calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org](mailto:calendar@arlingtonfamilyconnection.org).

### March Issue Deadlines:

**Article deadline: Feb. 10**

**Calendar deadline: Feb. 17**