

September/October 2014

NANNY MAGAZINE

teach play love



WHAT'S WRONG WITH
AMERICAN EDUCATION
TODAY?

Exclusive on Baby-sitters Club Author

Our NYC interview with
Ann M. Martin reveals
the inspiration
behind the
series.

PRIVACY AND
PLAYGROUND
GOSSIP

LIVE AN
ORGANIC
LIFESTYLE

BAD BOSS
HORROR
STORIES

NANNYVAN.
ADVOCACY
ON WHEELS

BANISH
BORING
LUNCHBOXES

NANNY MAGAZINE

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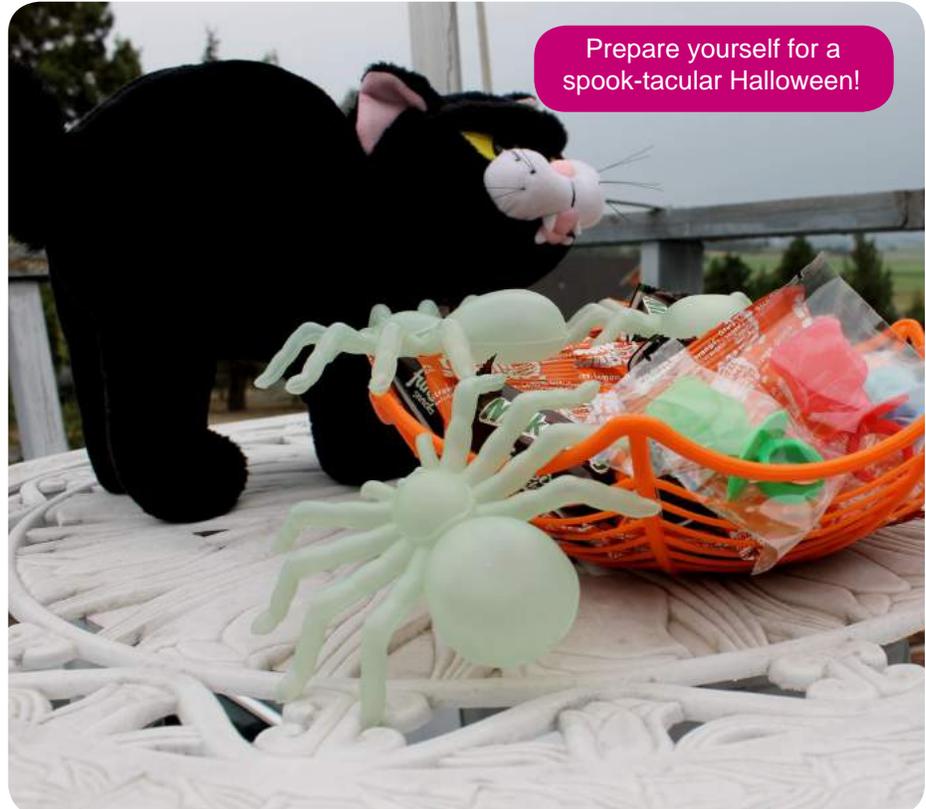
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Editors' Note

"STAND UP TO YOUR OBSTACLES AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM. YOU WILL FIND THAT THEY HAVEN'T HALF THE STRENGTH YOU THINK THEY HAVE."

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

Norman Peale, minister, author, and forerunner of "positive thinking", could have been speaking to a nightmare-stricken toddler or a middle-aged man undergoing a midlife crisis with these words. Obstacles and real-life nightmares strike us at every stage of life, from newborn to elderly. Knowing how to deal with them and move forward, though, is what truly defines success in our lives.

This issue of *Nanny Magazine* is meant to tackle these obstacles and celebrate the many ways to find success in overcoming them. As nannies, we encounter nightmares in every form, from the night terrors of a charge to a horrific MomBoss takeover. Learn how to handle these and many more dreadful obstacles with Dr. Lindsay Heller (you know her as The Nanny Doctor) as she tackles real-life reader horror stories with appropriate tact. Plus, get Marla Kilfolye's input on behalf of the Bad Ass Teachers Association on the obstacle that is the American education system. Savanna Fox brings us up to date on the NannyVan and how this can be a priceless tool in conquering daily obstacles such as taxes and labor laws. And what's a horror issue without Halloween costume inspiration and decorating ideas by our resident activities author Jen Webb from the Educated Nanny blog? Also worth note is the ghoulishly nutritious and freakishly delicious spooky treats by registered dietitian Katarina Gasic.

The crown gem of this issue is definitely our interview with Ann M. Martin, author of The Baby-sitters Club book series that was published between 1986 and 2000 but still remain popular today. Indeed nannies and babysitters far and wide credit these novels as the inspiration for their careers. *Nanny Magazine* author Nicole Panteleakos sat down with Martin in her specious Manhattan apartment to get the scoop on her inspiration, current projects, and how the BSC series made Martin world famous.

Nannies, don't let whatever obstacle you're up against right now get you down. Take a step back, reevaluate your goals, and stand up to your challenges with full force. If anything, the articles in this issue will show you that there is a great life waiting for you once you do, and there are tools available to help you get to that point.

Write in with your comments on this issue! submissions@nannymag.com.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "WJT".

Whitney Tang,
Executive Editor



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JMK".

Jennifer Kuhn, MPS,
Executive Editor



“ I’VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY MY HUMAN WON’T LEAVE THE HOUSE WITHOUT HER LEASH. I THINK SHE’S AFRAID OF GETTING LOST. BUT IT’S OK, I KIND OF LIKE SHOWING HER AROUND.”

—HARPER
adopted 08-18-09

A PERSON IS THE BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO A SHELTER PET



adopt

theshelterpetproject.org



A FLASHLIGHT

You probably won't need it because most trick-or-treating is wrapped up before dark, but bring a flashlight along just in case. Suppose it's dusk and your charge trips, skinning his knee. Aren't you glad you brought the flashlight so you can help bandage him up? If it starts to get dark and you're not finished trick-or-treating, have the kids hold the flashlights while they walk to help you see them better.

Try Steelman Aluminum Flashlight, \$9



WIPES

Because trick-or-treating involves sticky candy. Because wipes are a staple for any and all situations involving children. Because that face paint the kids have on gets everywhere. Because wipes are undoubtedly the best invention since sliced bread. Moral of the story? Bring wipes. Lots of them.

Try Dettol Antibacterial Wipes, \$5

SAFETY ITEMS

Bring bandages, antibiotic ointment, and any allergy medication you or your charges may need. Trick-or-treating makes it hard to control what the children are exposed to. Costumes can sometimes make it hard for kids to walk, so tripping and falling aren't out of the question.

Try Pacey First Aid Travel Kit, \$10



Tricks of Trick-or-Treating

BY NICOLE CLARK.

TRICK-OR-TREATING IS ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT CAN BE GREAT FUN OR A COMPLETE DISASTER. AVOID THE LATTER WITH THESE SIMPLE (BUT VERY NECESSARY) ITEMS AND THROW THEM IN YOUR OWN BAG OF NANNY TRICKS!

SNEAKERS

The sneakers that light up are particularly great because they help with visibility once it starts to get dark. This is especially true for those little girls who want to be princesses in high heels for Halloween. And why not let them? Yes, they may want to have those beautiful sparkly plastic shoes clinking on the floor now, but give it 15 minutes and they'll be asking to walk around barefoot. Enter sneakers.

Try K Swiss Bigshot Lights, \$60



ONE EMPTY BAG

There are a few reasons I suggest this. Giving your charges a piece or two of candy is no big deal—it is Halloween, after all! But those wrappers can get messy, especially for those of you in hot climates where the chocolate melts as fast as ice cream. And if they only eat one bite of that chocolate bar, the rest of it is sure to make a mess. Throw an empty plastic grocery bag in your own bag to store trash. You can also pick through the child's candy haul on the move and remove suspect candies or items that contain ingredients your charge is allergic to.

Try xyz first aid kit, \$9

FINGER FOODS

Pack some snacks. Kids get hungry! Especially when they are doing something physical like walking around. True, you're going around door to door to collect things in a bag for the kids to eat, but do you really want them eating gluttonous amounts of chocolate before bed? Of course not. Pack some sandwiches, apples, and baby carrots and voila! Dinner on the go.

Try Bolthouse Farms Baby Carrot Snack Bag, \$4



BUYING GUIDE

Flashlight: Amazon.com
Wipes: Dettol.com
First Aid Kit: Pacey.com
Sneakers: Kswiss.com
Carrots: Amazon.com

Extend Your Summer Wardrobe into Fall!

BY ANGELICA STAPLETON.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY TANG.

Once September rolls around, the back-to-school sales start popping up everywhere. Slowly but surely, the days get shorter and the air gets colder. Before long, it's officially time to swap out the shorts for jeans, the tank tops for sweaters, and the flip-flops for riding boots. But the coming of cooler weather doesn't mean you have to pack up your summer wardrobe entirely!

There always seems to be some struggle at this time of year with transitioning between seasons and knowing what to box up into storage or what to leave hanging. Many staple pieces normally considered summer-only attire can actually be repurposed into fashionable fall staples.

LEGGINGS

Leggings are easily one of the most versatile wardrobe staples. Dress them up or down effortlessly. Black, burgundy, navy, and hunter green are the best colors of the season. Pairing your leggings with some flats and a tunic or tee shirt can keep you not only on trend, but comfortable. Whether running errands, picking your charges up from school, or crouching down on the carpet to play, you can never go wrong with leggings. Best of all, you can extend the life of that adorable dress you picked up on clearance in August just by throwing on a pair of leggings underneath.

Cost factor: Leggings are a cheap addition to any outfit. Stock up for the fall and you can even layer them under jeans for the upcoming winter months!

Where to shop: Forever 21 has leggings in every shade of the rainbow for a very low cost. Target and H&M are good choices as well.

CARDIGANS

Much like leggings, a cardigan can easily dress an outfit up or keep it casual. These babies come in a multitude of colors and prints, making it easy for any woman to pick up a few cardigans that come in that season's hottest colors. Cardigans have the ability to give that comfortable leggings-and-tee-shirt combo an extra layer when it's not necessarily hot enough to put on the knit sweater yet. To add some sophistication to an outfit with a cardigan, have some fun with an around-the-waist skinny belt and complete your look with a pair of riding boots.

Cost factor: Depending on your desired thickness, cardigans range from very inexpensive to relatively pricey.

Where to shop: Francesca's, Forever 21, and H&M are all great, low-cost options.

SCARVES

Scarves can easily be a girl's most sought-after accessory during the fall season. Available in a wide variety of styles, prints, colors, price points, and fabrics, scarves can create yet another layer on top of a leggings/cardigan combo and not only make an outfit more fashionable, but keep wearers warm in the cool fall breeze while chasing little ones around the park. The best part is you don't have to put your scarves in storage once winter rolls around; scarves are so versatile that you can incorporate them in almost every season—especially winter! Whether you are making trips to the grocery store, soccer practice, or dance class with your charges, you can still stay fabulous all bundled up while combating that sore throat.

Cost factor: Scarves are an inexpensive addition to any wardrobe.

Where to shop: Check out H&M for light, early fall options. However, Gap has a great selection of heavier alternatives for when the weather starts to turn.



Follow these tips and stress less about what to leave hanging and what to pack away until next summer. Simple. Warm. Stylish. Three easy steps for extending the life of your summer clothes and being the best-dressed nanny on the block.

Lunch Box Ideas

BY SHERRY DANIEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY TANG.

IT'S EASY FOR NANNIES TO PACK A BOLOGNA AND CHEESE SANDWICH FOR THEIR CHARGES WHEN TIME IS SHORT. BUT EATING FOODS PACKED WITH NUTRITION IS VITAL FOR HEALTHIER GROWTH, STRONGER MENTAL COGNITION, AND BETTER EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR. SO WHY NOT PACK LUNCHES THE DAY BEFORE AND MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE FRESH FRUITS, VEGGIES, AND WHOLEGRAIN TREATS? THINK IT HAS TO BE DIFFICULT OR EXPENSIVE FOR A FABULOUS LUNCHBOX MENU? THINK AGAIN!

Multigrain Crepes

Who said your charge needs a traditional sandwich every day? Why not try a crepe instead? You can pretty much add anything inside a crepe but for growing kids, add spinach, chicken, tomatoes, cheese, and avocado.

Chicken Salad in Whole Wheat Wraps

Chicken salad is an excellent source of protein and it can be made even healthier when you switch mayo to plain yogurt and use whole wheat wraps instead. Add on any veggies your charge will eat and they'll stay full for the rest of the school day.

Tuna Sandwiches with Spinach Leaves

Tuna is chock full of omega-3, a fatty acid that stimulates concentration and memory. It's also got a lot of protein to give your charge more energy to get through the after-lunch slump. In addition, if you hide spinach leaves inside, the little ones will also get more vitamin A. Cut the sandwich using a fun shaped cookie cutter for extra excitement.

A Variety of Cheeses

Calcium is a must for any growing child. Why not make cheese munching fun by sticking pretzels into min-

ature cheese blocks? Make it a main dish or add it on as a side.

Low-Fat Yogurt

Yogurt is an excellent source of calcium and children love to be creative with the way they eat it. Try to also pack blueberries, raspberries, and sliced strawberries so they can spruce up their yogurt. Don't forget the spoon.

Coconut Water

Coconut water may seem trendy to pack, but it's also a surefire way to hydrate your charges. It's packed with natural electrolytes, vitamins, and has a great refreshing taste.

**HUNGER
LOVES
THE
NEW HIT
DRAMA,
TOO.**

1 IN 6 AMERICANS STRUGGLES WITH HUNGER.

**TOGETHER
WE'RE**

**FEEDING
AMERICA**

The logo for Feeding America, featuring a stylized wheat stalk icon above the word "FEEDING" and the word "AMERICA" below it.

The NannyVan:
***“Accelerating the
Movement for Domestic
Workers’ Rights!”***



BY SAVANNA FOX. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY NANNYVAN.

DID YOU KNOW DOMESTIC WORKERS (THIS INCLUDES YOU, NANNY!) HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS?

THE NANNYVAN, A NEW MOBILE ARTS MEETS ACTIVISM PROJECT, IS CRUISING THE STREETS IN A CITY NEAR YOU FIGHTING FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS' RIGHTS.

After using harsh chemicals at work one day, I searched for alternatives on the NannyVan site. Excited to use this new resource, I clicked on the “Health And Safety Tips” imaged with cartoon bedbugs on a bus. Browsing through the list of episodes I stopped and pressed play on one titled “Da Lungs.” I was greeted with panting and coughing, which progressed to an alternating series of exaggerated characters: The Jewish New Yorker, The Spanish New Yorker, and finally “Miss Know-It-All”, NannyVan’s leading character to get good information out to the masses.

“Don’na go mixin’ alla them cleanin’ products! Some combos can be DEAD-ly!”

“Don’t use harsh commercial cleaning products. Instead, use natchural alternatives, like, uh, usin’ soapy wada, vinegar, and lemon juice as an all-purpose cleana. It’s more effective and safe for you AND the fammaly you wurk for.”
-NannyVan Site

This is just one example of the various humorous answers to your own nanny woes when you call into the NannyVan for advice.

Studio-REV, Marisa Jahn, and the National Domestic Workers Alliance have created NannyVan, a traveling, retro-inspired van that cruises around the country advocating for workers’ rights knowledge for domestic workers and employers. Their motto: “accelerating the movement for domestic workers’ rights!”

Marisa Jahn, founder of REV, a nonprofit organization helping to create and maintain rights for low-income immigrant women and youth was inspired by her own entrance into motherhood. She wanted to create a resource for both domestic employees and

The graphic features a dark red background. On the left, there are four stylized human figures in red, orange, pink, and purple. The first figure holds a red sign, the second holds a yellow smartphone, the third holds a pink sign, and the fourth is in a wheelchair holding a pink sign. To the right, the text 'Nanny Van App!' is written in a large, orange, cursive font. Below the text is a rounded orange button with the text 'Call Now! (347) 967-5500' in white.

their employers. After seeking out information for her own hired nanny, Jahn was struck by the lack of information for domestic workers and employers. “For several years prior I had been producing creative media projects with and about domestic workers. To reach workers, I sought to create a vehicle (sorry for the pun) so that could meet busy nannies where they’re at—in the park, at places of worship, and on the street,” Jahn said.

The concept of NannyVan may feel long overdue. Domestic workers, including nannies, have been underappreciated and poorly informed (or even misinformed) regarding their rights for far too long. Without regulation, without a place to turn for real concrete advice and resources, domestic workers and employers turn to each other. Employers of nannies who want information about fair pay and safe work environments too often turn to other moms and dads

and become misinformed and misguided. Nannies and housekeepers do the same. The game “Telephone” comes to mind. You remember the game. A group of people sit in a circle and whisper a phrase into the next person’s ear with the goal of trying to get the message across intact to the last person in line. The group usually has a chuckle about how the original phrase is wildly twisted in the end. How did “John had peaches for breakfast” become “John has three frogs and a necklace”? You get the idea.

In the case of domestic workers, the game is multiplied by hundreds of players. The outcome? Well, it isn’t nearly as funny when one parent tells another, “It is illegal in New York for full-time live-in nannies to share a room with their charges.” Then this gets passed down from one mom to the next and soon the message turns into, “Live-in nannies are required to share rooms with charges.”

Without a resource to turn to, real information gets muddled along the way, and uninformed, bad information only gets worse through translation.

NannyVan is a real, concrete vehicle where domestic workers and employers can direct each other for good, well-informed, static-free information about their jobs and employees.

Marisa Jahn is taking NannyVan around the country to playgrounds, churches, and fairs, reaching domestic workers and employers where they are, to spread the word about domestic workers’ rights. But don’t worry if the NannyVan doesn’t come to you, you can always get the information you need by simply visiting the NannyVan website or by calling or texting into the worker app where you can listen to various episodes about workers’ rights. Do you want to use less-toxic cleaning products at

work? Learn how through the NannyVan. Employers, do you want to provide your employees with the same benefits you yourself receive at your job? Learn how through NannyVan.

What's happening over at NannyVan (according to their travel itinerary, they should be perusing the streets of New York City) is exciting for nannies and all domestic workers because, with the invaluable information NannyVan provides, there is also a larger and perhaps more pressing issue being addressed: that domestic work is real work.

The NannyVan site and Jahn herself explicitly point to a series of events and laws that were passed over 80 years ago. The New Deal Labor laws have directly affected both domestic workers' legal rights and our cultural ideology that domestic work is not real work.

The New Deal labor laws were passed in the 1930s and provided government regulation and oversight to protect workers from being overworked and underpaid and to create safe working environments. Unions and Social Security were implemented during this era. Domestic workers in 2014 might be wondering what's changed since then because things like fair pay, time-and-a-half pay, the 40-hour work week limit, sick days, on-the-books pay, and social

security benefits, all of which were established by the New Deal, seem out of reach. Domestic workers are typically not on the books, sick days are unpaid, vacation is unavailable or unpaid, and hours worked often exceed 40 without overtime. And because domestic workers are often off the books either for immigration reasons or because employers don't want to pay the taxes, domestic workers don't receive social security for their retirement.

Why are domestic workers left out of these benefits implemented so many years ago? Because domestic in-home workers were not included in the New Deal regulations and in most states still are not protected by any specific employment laws. But this is changing. Four states now have a bill of rights protecting domestic workers: New York, California, Hawaii, and Massachusetts. Bills of rights for domestic workers in Illinois and Connecticut are underway. "Domestic workers in New York got together, started telling their stories in the capital, and organized to pass the United States' first Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in 2010. Other states since have followed suit. So nannies, housekeepers, and caregivers are truly making history right now not only for the millions of domestic workers nationwide but for other workers who were excluded under New Deal labor laws," Jahn said.

There are exceptions to the rule of the underpaid nanny. You may have read articles about some nannies who earn more than the average pediatrician, but they are basically signing their lives away for the convenience of their employers. The disparity between the norm, which is the underpaid, overworked, off-the-books domestic worker, and some nannies in New York City making over \$100,000 a year at first seems huge. However the reality is that both are overworked and generally lack protections of law that workers in other industries enjoy.

NannyVan, helping to inform employers and employees of fair working standards will hopefully help to close the gap between the norm and the exception. Ultimately initiatives like NannyVan will encourage more states to create a Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights, protecting domestic workers the way the New Deal Labor laws protect other categories of workers. Domestic workers should be fairly paid without having to sign their lives away.

The NannyVan might be coming near you soon, so keep a look out for a tricked-out bright orange van. NannyVan may just be the vehicle that gets domestic workers legal rights and may change the way domestic workers like nannies are regarded and respected. Our work is real work.



Nanny Spotlight

AMANDA DUNYAK

As this issue's Nanny Spotlight winner, Amanda will receive a complimentary one-year gift membership to the International Nanny Association. You can apply to win big for the next issue or nominate a nanny you think deserves the spotlight! Find out more at www.nannymag.com.

AMANDA DUNYAK ISN'T JUST A FULL-TIME NANNY. SHE'S A NEW JERSEY-BASED AGENCY OWNER WHO ALSO JUST HAPPENS TO BE NANNY MAGAZINE'S STREET TEAM LEADER AND A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO THIS PUBLICATION AS WELL AS WWW.NANNYMAG.COM. WE DON'T KNOW HOW SHE MANAGES EDITORIAL DEADLINES ON TOP OF CARING FOR TWINS AND A SINGLETON. BUT ONE THING IS FOR SURE: AMANDA IS DEFINITELY DESERVING OF THE SPOTLIGHT!



Amanda's NannyLife Horror Story

I thought I was signing on to a great family but it turned out to be a nightmare. It soon became very apparent that we weren't seeing eye to eye. The children would be great with me throughout the day, but tell their parents they hated me. It was devastating.

Even though light housekeeping was in my job description, I was given a three-page list of things to clean and fix, including scrubbing the grout in between the floor tiles. It was becoming too much to handle, but I am not the type of person that hops from job to job, especially with children. I had a difficult decision to make; should I stay or should I go?

I had a week off in my first month while the family was on a cruise. That was my thinking time and I was going to give it one more chance. When they returned it only took me one more day of torture to decide to resign (with 2 weeks' notice, of course). Well, MomBoss beat me to the punch. She called me 30 minutes after I left and fired me, attacking my character while doing so. I was in shock. It was a horrible experience that really broke me down, but eventually I grew up, moved on, and learned from it. I realized that being a nanny is a passion and something I am good at and that just because one family treated me that way didn't mean that every family would do the same.

"Amanda means so much more to our family than I can possibly write into words. Amanda takes our children out on daily adventures, sings with them, dances with them, laughs with them, wipes their tears, cleans their boo-boos, and smothers them with love. Amanda is family, our family, and she deserves to be recognized for the many achievements in her life. Our children our proof of how wonderful she is as a nanny, professionally and personally."

-Roni, Amanda's MomBoss

Spooky Treats

BY KATARINA GASIC, MS, RD.

These spooktacular treats are a great way to get your charges involved in the kitchen this season! Every goblin loves to gobble and these frighteningly delicious bites are sure to stir up everyone's taste buds! Need more reason to love these fresh ideas? The author is a registered dietitian, so you know that healthy choices are just around the corner. Scary good!

Mozz-ter Eyes



INGREDIENTS

8 small mozzarella cheese balls (bocconcini), halved

8 green olives, halved

DIRECTIONS

1. Drain the mozzarella balls and olives and slice both in half.
2. Place each olive half on one mozzarella half and secure in place with a toothpick.
3. Place in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

Frankenstein Brew



INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup spinach
- ½ cup kale
- ¼ cup cilantro
- 1 green apple, sliced
- 2 limes
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- 2 bananas
- 2 teaspoon flaxseeds
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup ice

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash the spinach, kale, and cilantro and place in a blender.
2. Wash, core, and cut the apple into large slices. Place the apple in the blender.
3. Squeeze the juice of 2 limes into the blender. Use one of the limes to yield 1 teaspoon of lime zest and place it in the blender.
4. Peel the bananas, split them in half, and place them in the blender.
5. Add the flaxseeds, honey, water, and ice to the blender.
6. Blend ingredients until smooth. Serve immediately or place in the refrigerator until ready to serve.



Baked Apple Faces

INGREDIENTS

2 apples of your choice

2 tablespoons honey

2 teaspoons raisins

½ cup oats

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit.
2. Line an 8" x 10" cookie sheet with parchment paper.
3. Wash and slice the apples in half. Then core the apples and place them on the cookie sheet.
4. Drizzle the honey on the apple halves to design a face or shape of your choice. Use the oats and raisins to place on top of the honey drizzle to make your spook-tacular design stand out.
5. Place the cookie sheet with the apple faces in the oven and bake for 45 minutes.
6. Let the apple halves cool before serving.

Playground Tales: The Damage Gossip Can Do

BY FARRAH HAIDAR. PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG BRANSON.

Mommy Musings

*A real MomBoss
weighs in on all
things nanny*

I am sure it's happened to you, dear nanny. You are on the playground, commiserating with other nannies about the ups and downs of the nanny life. It's normal, right? Just professionals discussing their jobs. But there's more to it than that. The details of your everyday job are actually someone else's life.

You see, employing a nanny is filled with gray areas. On one hand, it's an employer/employee relationship. On the other, nannies are allowed to enter and take care of the things parents hold most dear: our children and home. With that, nannies are given a front row seat to the intimate details of a family's life. With time, the amount of detail a nanny is allowed to witness grows.

It's easy to assume that because you are not technically family everything you witness is public knowledge. It's also easy to have certain details slip without thinking much about it. The truth is, though, that much of what you know about our lives is not something we would want to share in public. The next time you're chatting on the playground, here are some guidelines to follow:

When in doubt, don't discuss. If you feel even the slightest doubt

about sharing certain aspects of your NannyFamily's life, don't do it. Even if you think that it won't hurt them or that they will never hear about it, avoid disclosing anything. It's both respectful and a smart move on your part. The world is much smaller than you think and what you say can get back to your NannyFamily.

Don't assume that because you know, everyone knows. In the end, you are in our home, which means that you will overhear and see things that we may not have thought you should know. The phone call we took in front of you because we had to or a notice left on top of the mail or a discussion between the family members while preparing dinner: none of that should be public knowledge. You have been trusted to enter the inner circle of our lives. Honor that trust by respecting our privacy and keeping details to yourself.

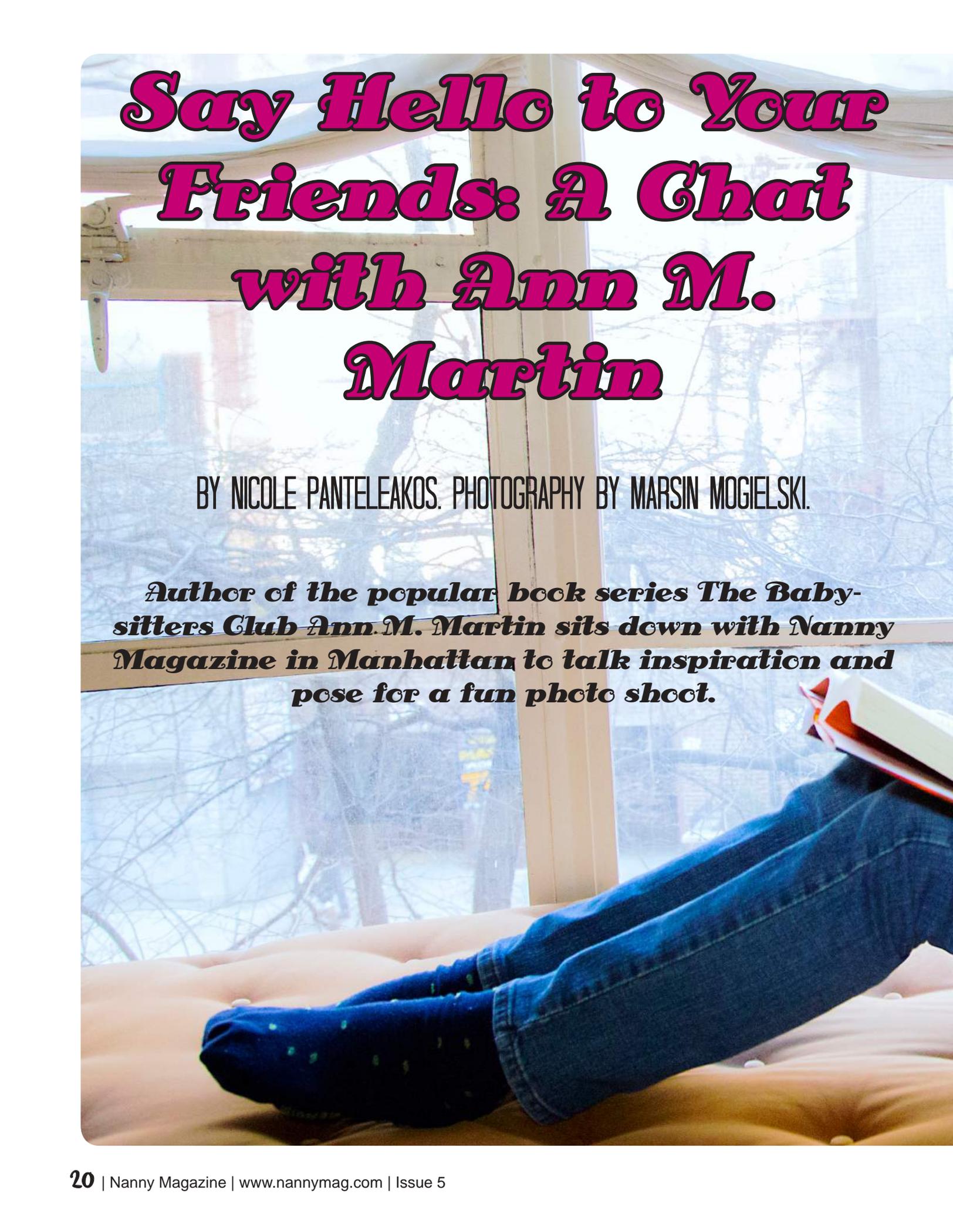
There's a fine line between venting and telling. You won't always agree with your employer on everything. Maybe you don't like their potty training method or disagree with how they discipline. It can be frustrating and commiserating with a fellow nanny can alleviate some of that frustration. But how you do this is important. Saying,

"I'm just struggling with work today" is very different than saying, "I can't believe she wants to do that. How can that be right?" complete with details of our decision. You can vent without going into detail. And you should never discuss your employers' parenting style.

There are certain items to never disclose. Now that we've addressed most of the gray areas, here are some items never to disclose in public. Any medical, financial, or work-related details you may be privy to shouldn't be discussed. Of course there are exceptions when it comes to the health and safety of the child you are with. For example, disclosing an allergy is both necessary and acceptable. But anything else? Don't.

I can tell you that it has happened to me. Another mother approached me with details of a conversation my nanny had about my parenting decisions. Aside from it being embarrassing, I also felt violated, like my inner sanctum had been exposed. That coupled with other factors was the end of our relationship.

So, the next time you're discussing your job, be discrete. Just pause and think if your employer could hear the conversation, what would they think?



Say Hello to Your Friends: A Chat with Ann M. Martin

BY NICOLE PANTELEAKOS. PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARSIN MOGIELSKI.

*Author of the popular book series **The Babysitters Club** Ann M. Martin sits down with **Nanny Magazine** in Manhattan to talk inspiration and pose for a fun photo shoot.*





There are over 100 books in the BSC series, and Ann has them all lining her bookshelves.

“Need Money? Save Time! Call KL5-3231.”

Those words, printed on the back of every original *Baby-sitters Club* (BSC) book series cover, are as familiar to 90s girls as Lisa Frank stickers, Madonna music videos, and the original SNICK lineup. Was there an American tween between 1986 and 2000 who didn't know all about Kristy, Claudia, Stacey, and Mary Anne? Even today, nearly 30 years after the publication of Book 1, *Kristy's Great Idea*, girls worldwide are discovering *The Baby-sitters Club* through the rerelease of the early novels, reruns of the television show, and a new graphic novel version. Recently *Nanny Magazine* sat down with BSC author Ann M. Martin in her New York City apartment to discuss the series, her 2003 Newbery Honor Award, current projects, and every nanny's intro to childcare: babysitting.

FINDING IDENTITY THROUGH CHARACTERS

As loyal readers can attest, *The Baby-sitters Club*, which eventually expanded

to include seven regular members, two associate members, and one honorary member, had something for everyone. It was not uncommon for a girl to identify herself as “totally Claudia!” or “mostly Abby, but a little Dawn,” or perhaps a Jessi-Shannon-Stacey hybrid. And young male readers could look up to Logan, a popular athlete who was also great with kids.

Martin, who based Mary Anne on herself but considers Kristy her favorite, says this is because she “tried to create characters very different from each other. Girls found one character they strongly identified with, someone to relate to. The series is probably the equivalent of a British cozy... you could just keep reading and reading.” And for over 15 years, until the original club members finally graduated from eighth grade, readers did exactly that.

Why has the series been able to stand the test of time?

“There are a few things,” says Martin, who still considers *Kristy's Great Idea* her

favorite, while also ranking *Claudia* and *The Sad Goodbye* and *Jessi's Secret Language* at the top of her list. “The problems and issues are pretty timeless. Families are facing the same issues they did 30 years ago.”

And the BSC certainly faced some major issues! With over 130 books in the original series (not counting mysteries, super specials, spinoffs, and the like), Martin was able to tackle divorce, Down syndrome, a devastating house fire, leukemia, the death of a grandparent, foster care, obesity, dyslexia, and child abuse, to name a few. “It was important (to do so) just because so many families are going through something—autism, racism, bullying—and I felt that sweeping it under the rug is never a good idea. Chances are every kid reading knows somebody with those issues, and I thought it would help, to hopefully spark a discussion with a responsible adult, to shed a light on some of these things.”

Among the most heartrending of the series is *Mary Anne and the Memory*

Garden, in which the title character mourns a 13-year-old friend who is killed by a drunk driver. Mary Anne's subsequent depression leads her to the office of a psychiatrist who teaches her to cope, sending the message to kid readers that it's okay to ask for help. This sentiment is seemingly even more important today considering the rising suicide rates among today's tweens and teens.

TOO TOUGH TO TACKLE

There is one issue that Martin regrets not having tackled in the BSC series: AIDS. Martin had "a number of" discussions with her editor, David Levithan, about a child facing AIDS. Says Martin, "The main reason we didn't was that kids as young as seven were reading, and we thought it was too sophisticated. However, if we were doing it now, we likely would have." In response to "Wouldn't that have been a very sad book?" Martin said, "Maybe, but a lot of kids with AIDS are living normal lives," thus there's hope, and that's what she would have wanted to show.

Martin added that while the information about Stacey's diabetes in newer printings has been updated to reflect new medical knowledge, other situations have not, including those surrounding a twice-featured charge named Susan, who has autism. "I would write about it differently now," says Martin, adding that "the way kids are taught" has changed considerably since *Kristy and the Secret of Susan* debuted in 1990.

STILL SHINING

Martin smiles when asked about the fact that the books have met with such a positive reception upon recent rerelease. She explains that earlier in the day she'd been at a public school in

Chinatown with which she has a longstanding relationship. The kids "had a lot of questions about the graphic novel and how many books are in the series," said Martin. "It's very gratifying." That said, it's unlikely there will be another BSC book any time soon, the last having been a prequel called *The Summer Before*, released in 2011. Martin called it "a lot of fun" to write. "At the moment there

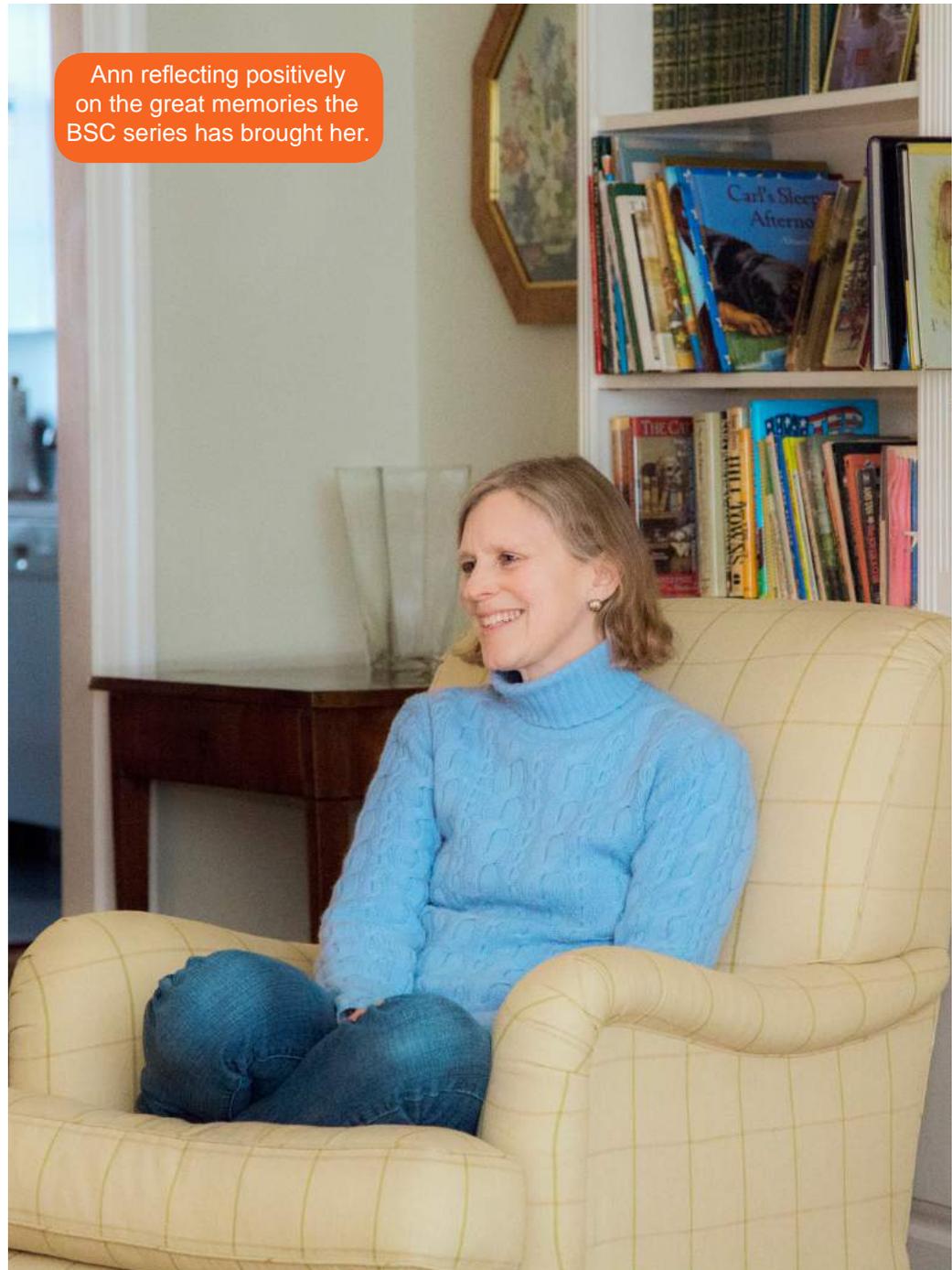
are no plans, but that doesn't mean it'll never happen. Never say never!"

THE GREAT SCREEN-TIME DEBATE

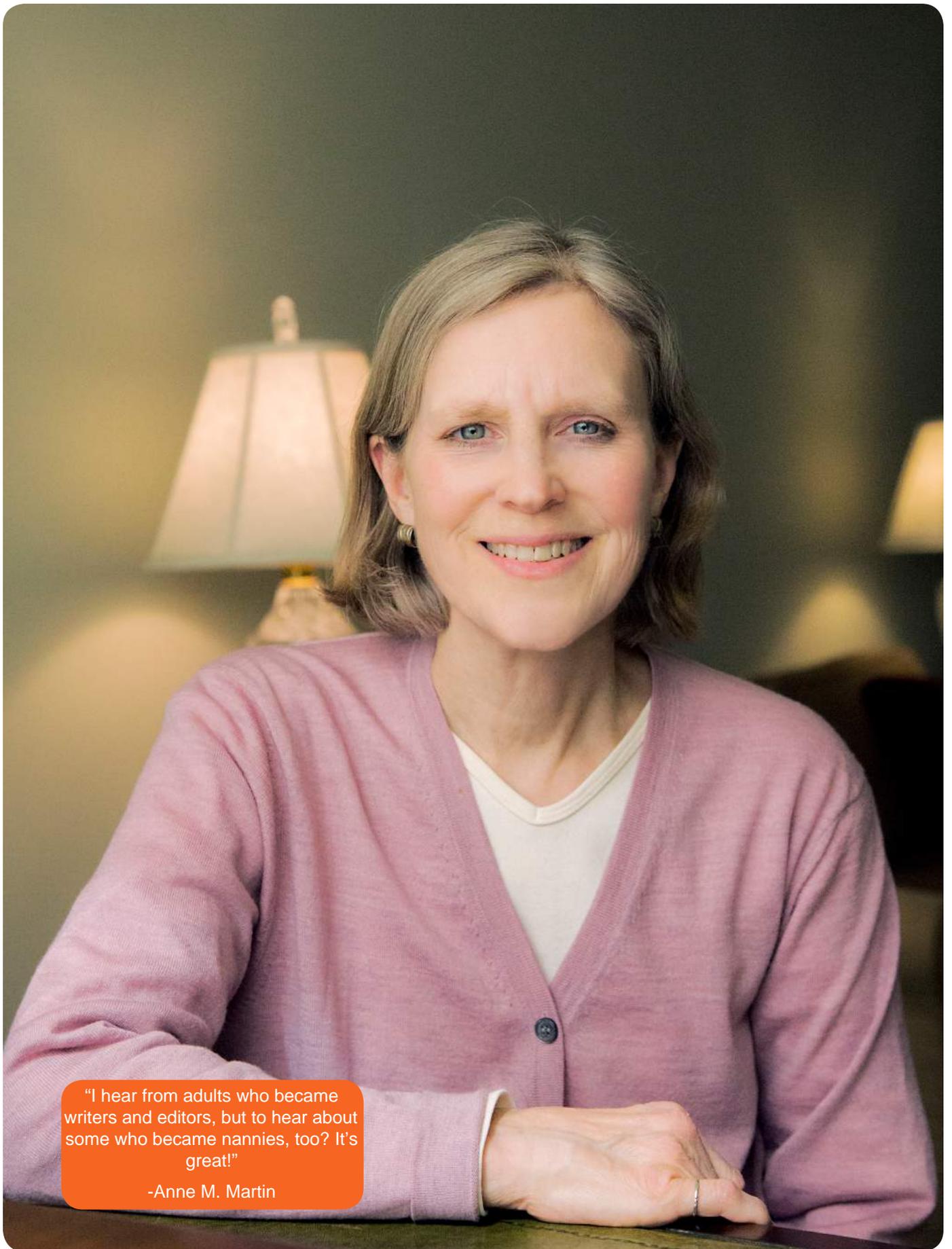
As those who grew up reading the novels will remember, a good babysitter plays with his or her charges, takes them outside, teaches them, and encourages them to use their imaginations. These are all

things professional nannies do every day. But there was one big no-no oft-mentioned in the books: parking children in front of the television. With technology growing and changing so quickly and becoming such a necessary part of our lives, does Martin still think it's important to strictly limit screen time?

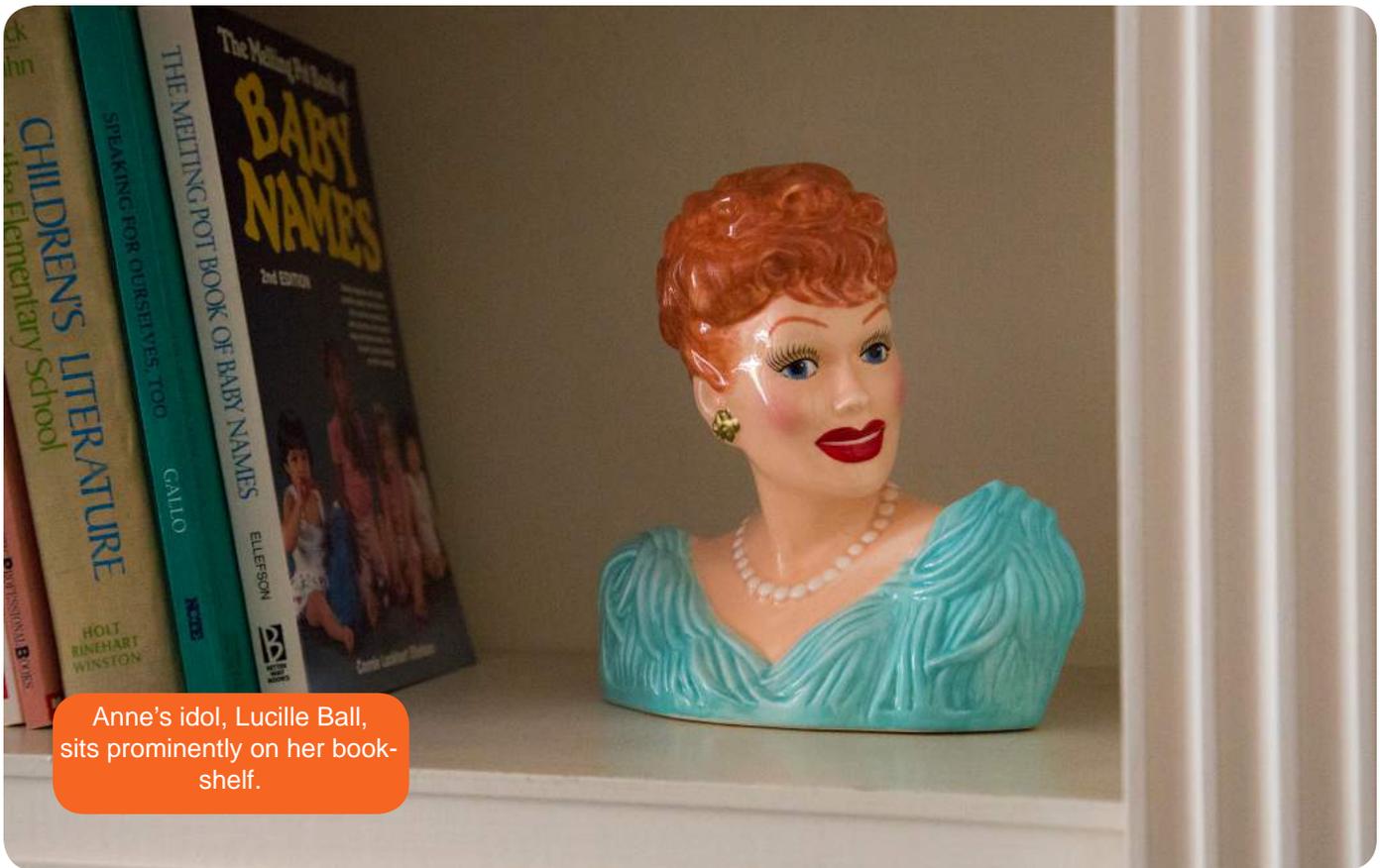
"I almost never thought I'd hear myself say it, but it's



Ann reflecting positively on the great memories the BSC series has brought her.



"I hear from adults who became writers and editors, but to hear about some who became nannies, too? It's great!"
-Anne M. Martin



Anne's idol, Lucille Ball, sits prominently on her bookshelf.

important to expose kids to technology because they have to use it." She quickly adds that kids should also be encouraged to "do dance, sports, music—my favorite babysitters brought craft stuff!" With a chuckle, Martin also admits that she "just got" her first smartphone about 10 days prior to our interview because she felt "out of it." That said, one of her favorite hobbies is sewing.

READING IS BONDING

Martin's father was an avid reader, and her mother taught preschool. As a child, Martin visited the library on a weekly basis. She and her sister used to enjoy reading aloud to each other, and this, coupled with encouragement from her parents, meant that the author grew up surrounded by wonderful books and characters. It's no wonder that she went on to become such a major contributor to

children's literature.

One wonderful way any nanny or babysitter can spend time with her charges is, of course, curling up with a good book. Martin has some advice for nannies whose charges are reluctant readers: "Find something that appeals to your charges, even if it's comic books. There are so kinds of books. Find something to tickle their fancy, and if they really don't like reading, read aloud to them. Let kids choose their own books."

And now that the BSC members have moved on from middle school, Martin has moved on, too, having written more than 25 other books for young readers, some in series, others that stand alone, a couple in collaboration with other authors, and one Newbery Honor winner. For those less familiar with the world of children's literature, the

Newbery is the highest accolade a chapter book or novel for children can receive. Awarded annually by the American Library Association since 1922, the seal is a mark of distinction (bronze for Newbery winners, silver for Honor books) that tells a potential reader that the book is a high-quality contribution to the field of children's literature.

HIGH HONORS

One of those silver seals is affixed to Martin's *A Corner of the Universe*, a historical novel that takes place in the 1960s. Based on an uncle who had been diagnosed with childhood schizophrenia, the novel is Martin's favorite of all those she's written. "The award has something to do with it," she says, smiling. "But it's also the most personal. I learned a lot about my family when working on it."

Martin says that she hopes readers of *A Corner of the Universe* "will come away with a better understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders and what it's like to face people who don't understand you or who make fun of you. There's nothing more damaging than not knowing, and that goes for kids with all different issues," Martin said, adding that it is important to give a "glimpse from somebody else's perspective."

Martin, who worked with children on the Spectrum during the summers from her senior year of high school through her senior year of college, also recommends encouraging kids who are neurotypical to interact with those who have special needs.*

BABYSITTERS TO NANNIES

Back to the BSC. Though the four original members have

been 13 for nearly three decades, fans have aged. Many grew up to become babysitters, nannies, teachers, or writers thanks to the influence of the books, which they are now passing on to their charges, students, and children. Is Martin surprised to hear that so many nannies cite her series as an inspiration that pushed them toward their current childcare careers?

“Surprised, yes. Thrilled, though! I hear from adults who became writers and editors, but to hear about some who became nannies, too? It’s great! I think it’s a really important job. It’s wonderful,”

she says, adding “depending upon the background and interests” of the nanny, she or he “can teach kids, extending what they are exposed to in school. So I think it’s very important!”

WHAT-IF ANALYSIS

And which, if any, of the members could have grown up to nanny? According to Martin, the most likely “might be Mary Anne,” the quietest, shyest member of the BSC, a girl who could dissolve into tears whether happy or sad, but who also showed off her inner strength on more than one occasion. “They are all

great babysitters, great with kids, but Mary Anne was so nurturing, and she wanted to be a teacher, so I can see her wanting to become a nanny instead of or in addition to that.”

But whether you’re a Mary Anne or a Mallory, one thing’s for certain: as a nanny, you can make all the difference in the life of a child. And who knows? Maybe you’ll even inspire your charges to start their own babysitting club someday!

**for advice about how to encourage play between a neurotypical child and one with ASD, see the article in Nanny Magazine’s March/April issue.*



REAL NANNIES LIKE YOU WROTE IN. FIND OUT WHO OWES THEIR ENTIRE CAREER TO THE BSC!

“How cool was it that these seventh graders had an idea and started their own business? They were future CEOs in the making! The series was the foundation for me wanting to own my own nanny business.”

—Teena from Michigan

Everybody
hates
you.

You don't see
bullying like
this every day.

Your kids do.

Teach your kids how to
**be more than
a bystander.**

Learn how at
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Data Blitz

We've scoured the Internet to come up with these interesting facts. Learn something new this month!

BY AMANDA DUNYAK.

The antioxidants in dark chocolate may help people suffering from reduced blood flow to their legs.
(WebMD)

Early computers, developed in the 1940s, were the size of a large room and consumed lots of electricity.
(Science Kids)

In 1911, pigtails were banned in China because they were seen as a link with its feudal past.
(List Verse)

It can take 4 months for a pumpkin to grow to full size. If you plant a pumpkin seed, do so when the ground warms up in spring.
(Random House)

The television show "The Nanny" ran for 6 seasons from 1993-1999, ending voluntarily and not from cancellation.
(Fun Trivia)

If the characters in *The Babysitters Club* books had aged past middle school, they would have been 28 when the series ended.
(Mental Floss)

Halloween's origins are based on a Gaelic festival called "Samhain" which means. "Summer's end."
(Live Science)

Most American youth do not meet the daily recommendations for eating 2 ½-6 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables.
(CDC.gov)

Leonardo DiCaprio was originally offered the lead role in the favorite childhood movie, *Hocus Pocus*.
(Huffington Post)

On September 2, 1969, the first ATM opened for business.
(History.com)

In August 2012, Americans spent an estimated \$8.5 billion at family clothing stores.
(US Census Bureau)

Parchment is better than aluminum foil because it enhances natural flavors and is better for the environment.
(About.com)



Grassroots Efforts Create Longstanding Nanny Tradition

The Story behind National Nanny Recognition Week

BY KELLIE GERES. PHOTO USED WITH PERMISSION FROM KELLIE GERES.

Started in 1998 by Mary Clurman (Nanny News), Judi Merlin (A Friend of the Family), and a group of dedicated industry professionals, National Nanny Recognition Week (NNRW) was created to draw attention to the positive aspects of nannies instead of the negative issues the press seems to thrive on.

Past events scheduled across the country included a 1,000-nanny march on the capitol steps of Washington, D.C., a rally in Atlanta's Centennial Park, and various parties and picnics hosted by agencies and nanny support groups nationwide. NNRW has become an annual event lauded by nannies, industry professionals, nanny support groups, industry leaders, professional organizations, and the parents who employ the nannies.

In 1999, The National Association of Nan-

nies (NAN), which was the first national organization run by nannies for nannies, was given permission to adopt NNRW as its own and developed it into a weeklong celebration ending with its annual conference. NAN folded in 2005 but the NNRW legacy was passed on to Association of Professional Nannies, who took over the reins in 2007. In 2009, veteran nannies Kellie Geres and Angela Jackson took over the national efforts of NNRW and continue to oversee the event.

What began as an effort of few now spans hundreds of professionals the last full week of September each year. Slated for September 21–27, 2014, NNRW continues to focus on the positive qualities nannies bring to their charges and jobs every day. NNRW is the chance for parents and agencies to say "thank you" to their wonderful caregivers.

Social media has made an impact on the reach and awareness of NNRW, allowing for more nannies, parents, and industry professionals to learn about the event and participate. Regarding Nannies, a popular blog for nannies, gives nannies an opportunity to say thank you to their friends and colleagues with Notes of Appreciation.

This year is NNRW's first year abroad, with events being planned in Australia under the helm of Louise Dunham of a local agency, Placement Solutions. In addition, many cities across the country will hold events hosted by area nannies, nanny groups, placement agencies, and more.

NNRW is not about cash bonuses or a paid day off. It's about saying thanks to nannies for a job well done.

13 Do It Yourself Costume Ideas

BY JEN WEBB.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
GARY TANG.

1. A Dalmatian

This simple costume is made by sewing black felt patches onto white sweatpants and a white hooded sweatshirt. Design the ears with the black felt and sew them to the hood of the sweatshirt.



Scuba Diver

Use a rash guard to keep your charge's warm!

2. The Jellyfish

To create this slimy silly creature from under the sea use a white umbrella and attach strings of blue and white ribbon around the edge. Dress your charge in a white or blue sweat-shirt and sweatpants.

3. Scuba Diver

Using summer swimming gear create the perfect costume for kids who love to swim! Materials that are needed are board shorts, a tee shirt, goggles, a snorkel,

water shoes, and 1-liter soda bottle. Attach the empty soda bottle to the back of the shirt to resemble the oxygen tank.

4. Despicable Me Minion

With a yellow shirt, blue overalls, and goggles you can easily transform your charge into this yellow rambunctious creature.

5. A Bunch of Grapes

Turn your charge into a delicious piece of

fruit. Dress him/her in brown leggings and a brown shirt. Attach purple balloons to the clothes.

6. A Bumble Bee

What is that buzzing sound? No need to worry! It's only your charge! To get this sassy costume you need black leggings, a black shirt, yellow felt, pipe cleaners, and a headband. Sew yellow felt stripes onto the black shirt. Wrap black pipe cleaners around a headband for antennas.



Mime
If your charge's skin is easily irritated, skip the face paint. The clothes make the outfit!

7. Dice

Transform an ordinary cardboard box into an admirable costume. Paint the cardboard box white with black dots to resemble die. Finish it off by cutting holes for your charge's head and arms.

8. An Artist

Convert your charge into a gifted artist. Splatter all colors of paint onto an old white button down shirt and attach small paint brushes inside the pockets. Design a paint palette using cardboard.

9. The Mime

Create this silently simple costume with a black and white striped shirt, black pants, a black hat, and white gloves. Cover the child's face with white face paint and black or red lipstick.

10. A Scarecrow

With blue overalls, a plaid shirt, and a straw hat you can transform your charge into a ravishing scarecrow!

11. Where's Waldo?

Turn your charge into this famous book character with a red

and white striped shirt, blue jeans, a red hat, glasses, and a cane or long stick.

12. A Cowboy

Does your charge want to be a cowboy or Woody from *Toy Story*? This clever costume can be created with blue jeans, a cowboy hat, cowboy boots, and a plaid shirt.

13. A Duck

Dress a child in old yellow sweatpants, sweatshirt, gloves, and rain boots. Using a hot glue gun attach yellow feathers to the clothes.



Times Change... And It's Spooky!

BY ERICA CHRISTOPHER. PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIFFANY BREUNIG.

BOO!

It's Halloween! Spooky, eh? But not spooky in the way it used to be. Oh no. I am no longer scared of witches, goblins, and ghosts. Now I am scared of sugar highs (and lows), itchy costumes, and contaminated candy.

It's funny how things evolve. Halloween is still one of my favorite holidays. I love a good themed party and who doesn't love a little fright? But Halloween with kiddos is a whole different animal.

Remember when you were in college and Halloween was about finding a cute costume and having another excuse to party? Now it's about who gets to be the best princess and an excuse to eat bucket loads of candy. (Maybe it's not all that different after all?)

Let's compare.

Costumes in college: Let's face it, they weren't always classy... or appropriate... but they were hot! Shorter dress? Sure! Construction workers wearing lipstick and heels? Why not! We've all been there, and we can look back and laugh.

Costumes as a kid: Look no further than the latest Disney movie to come out. "Okay, I have to be the princess or I'll just die. I don't care that 95% of my classmates will have the same costume!" Also enjoy: "No, Mom!!! I am not Superman. I'm Batman. There is a huge difference!" And don't forget the universal complaint: "Mom! This costume is itchy!" But they look cute, right?

Trick or treating in college: Um... if you actually went door-to-door then we might have a different problem. Regardless, trick or treating for the young adult might have involved sugar-filled adult beverages (complete with witty names and high prices), zombie-themed finger foods, and the occasional candy apple (but the trendy espresso covered one, of course). "Happy Halloween! I'll try the naughty witch's brew please. And my friend will have the



golden goblin gimlet.”

Trick or treating as a kid: “Trick or treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat! If you don’t, I don’t care...” We all know how that one ends. Trick or treating probably represents some of our fondest Halloween memories from childhood. But I now see it differently. Sure, candy is great and every kiddo should experience the fun in fun-size. But there’s also plenty of “I don’t wanna walk anymore! My feet hurt!” and “Can you carry my bag? It’s heavyyyyy...” and the most popular “She got more than me! Dad! It’s not fair!” But despite this, it’s a rite of passage and I wish kids nowadays could grab their pillowcases and run the neighborhood like back in the day! (Remember that, 80’s kids?!)

Sugar crashes in college: One word—hangovers.

Sugar crashes as a kid: Two words—temper tantrums.

Pumpkins in college: We all look forward to the pumpkin spice lattes, don’t you dare deny it! Sprinkle in a few comedic pumpkin carvings and/or traced emblems of your favorite sports teams and you’ve covered it. Unless, of course, you ordered a tight-fitting orange costume to wear to this year’s fraternity ball?

Pumpkins as a kid: Jack-o-lanterns! Nothing better than going to the pumpkin patch, finding just the right pumpkin, and carving just the right Halloween-tastic face in it. “This one is perfect!” (Watch out grown ups; “perfect” means it’s huge and he can’t lift it. I hope you’ve been working out!)

Spooky in college: I lost my ID!

Spooky as a kid: Spaghetti disguised as a brain and/or prerecorded ghost sounds as you walk up to a house. Both real Halloween classics!

Should You Cut the Ties with Your Nanny Job?

BY KERRIE BASCOMB.

1. It's Sunday night, the night before another work week. How are you feeling about Monday?

- a. "I can't wait to get to work and see my charges!"
- b. You're considering calling in sick tomorrow morning.
- c. You'd rather be off, but going to work is not the worst thing in the world.

2. When you receive your Friday paycheck, you are thinking:

- a. "I deserve so much more than this."
- b. "I feel like I should be paid more, but at the same time, I am feeling blessed."
- c. "My paycheck truly reflects all that I do and the appreciation my NannyFamily has for me."

3. Your contract states that your housekeeping duties are related to the care of the children. In reality you:

- a. Sweep and mop floors, clean all bathrooms, make children's beds and parents' bed, make dinner for entire family five days a week, wash and fold both children's and parents' laundry, and clean all weekend dishes.
- b. Clean children's playroom and bedroom, organize baby supplies, wash and dry children's laundry, asked about once or twice a week to do things like clean parent's bathroom, wash and dry parent's laundry, clean out refrigerator, or clean and mop floors.
- c. Tidy up the children's play room and bedroom, organize baby supplies, clean and dry bottles, and do children's laundry.

4. Your boss hands you your check for the week:

- a. Reluctantly
- b. With a smile and a thank you
- c. Completely "forgets"... again...

5. When your charge wants another cookie and you've told him "no" already, your DadBoss walks into the room and...

- a. He backs you up, explaining to your charge that what you say goes.
- b. He doesn't say anything and pretends he didn't hear anything.
- c. He gives your charge the cookie they are asking for.

6. When you direct your charge to follow through on something you ask of them, they generally:

- a. Shout "no!" and start laughing.
- b. Follow through, even if asked once or twice again.
- c. They reluctantly say "okay" and then shuffle their feet, making sure it takes a century to do what you asked.

7. When approaching your boss to discuss a job-related question, they:

- a. Tell you that they are too busy for a discussion and ask if they could discuss it at a different time.
- b. Welcome a discussion.
- c. Act irritated and seem to put you down for even asking a question.

What Are Your Results?

Question Number	A	B	C
1	1 point	3 points	2 points
2	3 points	2 points	1 point
3	3 points	2 points	1 point
4	2 points	1 point	3 points
5	1 point	2 points	3 points
6	3 points	1 point	2 points
7	2 points	1 point	3 points

7-9 POINTS:

You seem pretty happy with most aspects of your nanny job. You receive respect from your bosses and charges. You genuinely can feel like part of the family and feel comfortable in your work space.

10-15 POINTS:

You may be on the fence about how you feel about the family you are working with. Some aspects of the job are great and some aspects just make the job downright difficult. Either you feel that there's more for you to adjust to with your NannyFamily or it is time to move on to bigger and better things.

16-21 POINTS:

You can say that most of the time you are not excited to be at work and find it difficult to work harmoniously with your NannyFamily. It is time to seriously sit down and ask yourself why you are still at your current job and if it is time for you to move on.



Organic Living: Expensive Produce, or Is There More?

BY KELLY KNOWLTON. PHOTOGRAPHY BY
TIFFANY BREUNIG.

When you think of organic living, what comes to mind? The special section of the grocery store? Or is it produce grown without the use of pesticides? Perhaps, it is eating non-genetically modified foods that pops into your mind. On the surface, living organic may appear to be simple: eat the foods labeled “organic,” only use organic cleaning agents, and call it a day.

But there is more to living an organic lifestyle than the eye can see. Organic living is nourishing the mind, body, and soul to create one cohesive unit to allow us to function at our best. Organic living is about taking a look around and realizing what is beneficial to our being, while also recognizing what could be toxic to us. Let's pause for a minute. What does living organic have to do with you as a nanny, and why should it matter to you?

Here is the simple, straightforward answer. Your charges look up to you and probably spend most of their day with you, while imitating and modeling all of your behaviors and actions. Most of the time, your bosses will ask you how the day went and trust you to create a routine that is beneficial for their child. They trust you with their family, and trust you to nourish the mind and body of their children. With all of these major responsibilities, it is apparent that you are the one who can help your NannyFamily adapt to a healthy lifestyle.

In 2012, Barbara Rodriguez, a nanny with more than 20 years' experience, wrote *The Organic Nanny's Guide to Raising Healthy Kids; Create a Natural Diet and Lifestyle for your Child*. The 274-page book focuses on living clean and organic.

While the book is written to the moms of the family, she writes of her importance in recognizing that various aspects of her charge's life needed vast improvement, and how to approach the moms to adapt a healthier way of life. She focuses on the concept of "L.O.V. E.," which stands for Local, Organic, Vegetable centered, Environmentally focused living. With you being the first line of contact with the family, just as this nanny was, how can you do the same thing? How can you set the example and have your bosses on board for a L.O.V. E. lifestyle?

BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE WITH YOUR CHARGES

It is no surprise that children need to be physically active. According to the American Heart Association, physical inactivity is a major component to developing coronary artery disease, while increasing the risk of stroke and diabetes in children. Being physically active as a child helps regulate weight, reduce the risk of diabetes, and perhaps even helps to reduce the risk of some types of cancer. While physical activity increases self-esteem and self-confidence, it is also important for properly developing fine and gross motor skills. Just like adults, children can also have anxiety and stress in their lives (think tests,

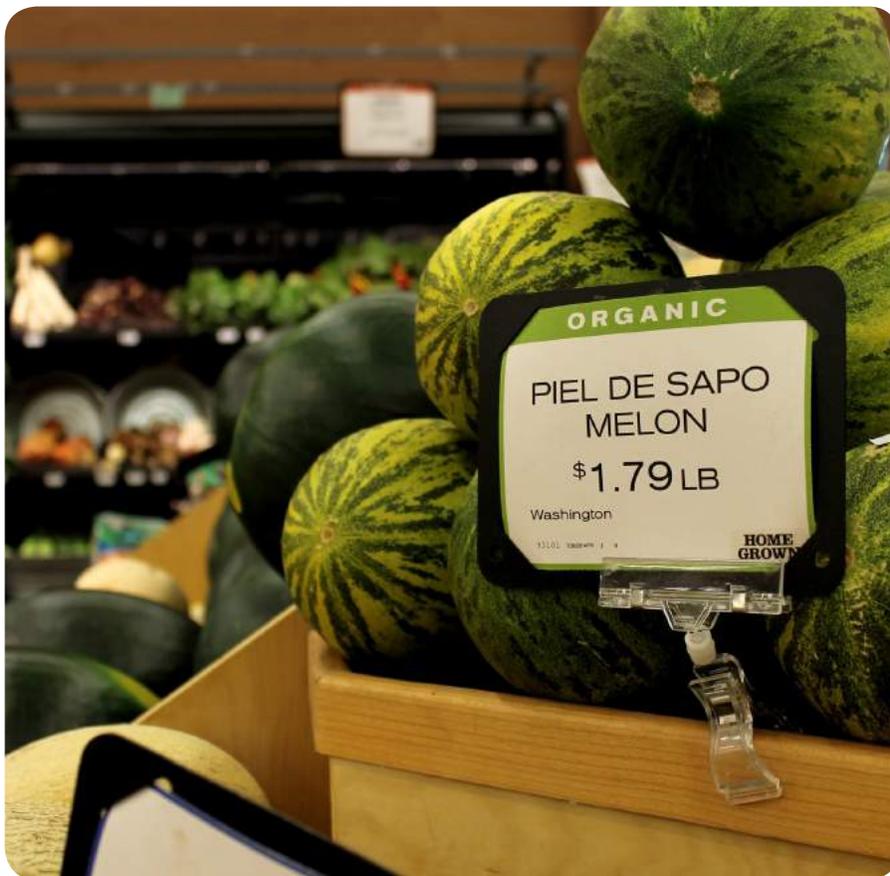
peer and societal pressure, and packed schedules). Simple physical activity can help eliminate that stress and anxiety, or at least bring it under control. Play also enhances language development, creativity, and thinking skills.

Just how much time per day is needed for a child to fulfill their minimum need for physical exercise? I asked Dr. Ephraim Bartfeld of Town and Country Pediatrics in Coventry, Connecticut, what his guidelines were for his patients. Dr. Bartfeld explained that the current asthma prevalence in children is approximately 10%, which is an increase from previous years. By squeezing in 30 minutes of physical activity per day, your charges will improve their lung function and mental acuity. He also agreed that setting the pattern of physical activity now will lead to happier, healthier, more productive adults.

What can you plan to do with your charges to fulfill the need for physical exercise? Make sure your activities are developmentally appropriate. Obviously, you cannot expect your two-year-old charge to dribble a basketball down the court. It would be unfair to expect that child to do that type of exercise, and could leave a sour taste of exercise for your charge. Likewise, having a 10-year-old charge confined to the tot lot at your local park is not going to challenge them in the right way either. No matter what developmentally appropriate activity you do, have fun with it. Climb that rope ladder at the playground and go down the slides with your charges. Do you remember how it feels to play good old-fashioned kickball, wiffle ball, or even tag? These are all great starting blocks to a more physically active life while having fun. There is no specific answer to the best type of physical activity your charges should participate in. Physical activity and play can occur both indoors and outdoors. Do whatever it takes to get in at least 30 minutes of rigorous physical activity each day.

We have the exercise part understood, now what food is recommended?

Here is an exercise for you. Point your search browser to "healthy eating in childhood" and look at the sheer number of results that come up. There are over 25 million articles in cyberspace regarding what to feed kids. That is entirely overwhelming! Another daunting





life fact: there are so many dietary sensitivities and allergies now that who truly knows what the exact science is behind what you should eat? However, even with all of the variables in our lives, there are some commonly accepted and simple ways to eat wholesome and organically.

According to helpguide.org, healthy eating can stabilize children's energy, sharpen their minds, and even out their moods. Encouraging healthy habits early in life will have an enormous impact and create the first stepping stone in your charge's overall relationship with food from now through adulthood. I will admit that even with my own children, I did not realize just how important the food was I fed them was. I also did not realize how much my children copied what I ate until I started changing our diet to wholesome food. This has brought about huge changes in their personalities and they no longer have that 3 p.m. meltdown (a.k.a. "the sugar

crash").

BUT JUST WHAT IS A WHOLESOME DIET?

Dr. Bartfeld advised that fruits and vegetables are an important part of any diet. A diet high in fresh and processed fruits and vegetables have been shown to decrease rates of heart disease, high blood pressure, gastrointestinal problems, and some cancers. For children specifically, it is difficult to quantify the benefits of fruits and vegetables in particular, but a balanced diet will deliver the nutrients important to growth, development, and performance. Try to purchase organic fruit and vegetables for your charges when you can. Not only do they usually taste much better, but they do not contain the pesticides and preservatives that are commonly found in non-organic foods.

Do you have a charge who is a picky eater and will not touch the healthy stuff?

There are quite a few ways to convince your charges to eat better. For starters, eat it yourself. Children imitate what they see. If they see you doing it, chances are your healthy habits will rub off on them. If you are a nanny who is also in charge of grocery shopping, have your charges get involved. Have them put the spinach in the produce

bag, pick out the fruit they want for the week, and talk to them about how important the food is while you do it. Tell them carrots will help them see better in the dark, or that spinach has iron and will help them grow. Children love to know why they are having to do things, and knowing why they eat things may help curb that meltdown at dinner

Do you have a charge who detests the taste of water? Try these tips.

- Have your charge pick out a special water bottle. Having their own special bottle to show off can help encourage drinking more.
- Start by diluting juice. This is only truly necessary if you have a die-hard juice drinker in your charge. Maybe start by going 50/50 and then lessen the amount every week until your charge barely notices they're drinking mostly water.
- Infuse your water. The secret in our house? Lemon water. My children love sour, and will drink lemon water all day. Do your charges like sweet? Try raspberries, blueberries, or even strawberries.
- Make sure it is cold. Would you want to drink lukewarm water?



over eating beans instead of chicken nuggets. Another major help? Purge the house (with permission of course) of all of the empty calories. This will make only healthy food available to your charges. We have created a separate drawer in our refrigerator full of “special” snacks for just our children. They love that they have the freedom to choose what they want to eat. I love the fact that they are eating healthy snacks (mostly pre-cut fruits and vegetables) and not empty calories.

THE GREAT JUICE DEBATE

Children love their juices, and understandably so. Why wouldn't they love a beverage with sugar that has been marketed specifically to them? But water is truly what we should all be drinking during the day. Close to 60% of our body is comprised of water. Water flushes our system, transports those amazing nutrients in the healthy foods, and aids in maintaining our body temperature. Water also keeps your digestive tract flowing, and there are few things worse than a child with intestinal unrest. Drinking water with every meal, keeping a bottle of water with you in the car or in your stroller, and eating fruits and vegetables will help you and your charges consume the proper amount of water.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

To round out the diet, think lean proteins and whole grains. Some of our favorite lean proteins are beans, fish, and poultry. There are a multitude of ways to prepare these lean proteins, and I have discovered that by having my children help cook, they are more eager to eat the meal we just prepared. Save on grains by purchasing in bulk. Not only will you be able to look at the wide variety of grains, you can smell them, and maybe even find a few that you have never heard of (such as purple sticky rice, one of our new favorites).

One final common misconception about living a healthy, wholesome lifestyle is the need for vitamins and supplements. According to Dr. Bartfeld, vitamins and supplements are vital for those who are missing nutrients. He does not believe that vitamins have a consistent impact on the health of a child, and it is more important to focus on providing a diet rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins.

Routine: The Hidden Necessity for Children Living an Organic Life

Why am I including routine in an article about organic living? After all, I did previously mention the importance of play

and physical activity. However, while it is so important to have all of this play and fun, there is a need for children to have a daily routine that is accepted between both you and your bosses. I had my sister in law, Jessica Knowlton (a former family and child therapist and current doula), give her advice on how important a routine is to living an organic lifestyle.

According to Jessica Knowlton, consistency is incredibly important for children. Children thrive with consistency and structure as it removes chaos and the unpredictable, allowing them to feel safe. Every caregiver should understand how each other caregiver does things and have a strong system of communication. As a babysitter and nanny, I always ask the parent to spend some time with me before they leave for the first time so that I can get to know how they parent. All people like when they can know what is coming next. When a child knows that she will always go to the library after the toys are cleaned up, you will likely find fewer toys on the ground and less anger when you ask her to put them away before leaving for the library. Similarly, you may find it easier to have naps or meals around the same times each day. If you change nap time or go somewhere new, just communicate that to the child, again making the child feel more safe and comfortable. When there is general consistency, you will find

happier children.

My Charges Are Happily Adjusting to a Healthier Life, but What about Me?

It is not mentally, physically, or spiritually healthy to not check in with yourself and see what you need. Adults often forget themselves while they are in the throes of raising children, and it is easy to do. I will admit that I was the worst at making sure that I was happy. I would make sure that everyone in my family was taken care of, including my husband, and not take the time to check in with myself for even a few minutes of inner calming. This led to me finally breaking down in tears one night, and not even wanting to get up. At that point, I knew it was time to start making myself a priority, too.

Rodriguez dedicated an entire chapter of her book to the sheer importance of caregivers taking the time to think of themselves. She recommends even taking a hot bath at night, finding that activity that makes your inner self sing. You can also try yoga or meditation. Both of these can be done in the home, before dawn, before bed, or even while charges nap. Don't worry about the dishes and household chores for 30 minutes. They will always be there; you need to make sure you are always there for yourself.

Community resources are also helpful for making sure that you

are able to have your you time. For instance, many YMCAs have childcare included in their gym memberships and offer a multitude of classes for a variety of tastes and levels. Many other fitness facilities also offer something similar as well. Dance studios are even recognizing the importance for adults to have that time, and often offer drop-in adult ballet, tap, hip hop, and other various dance classes.

If you do not like going to the gym or don't think of physical activity as your "me" time, check out craft stores. Many craft stores offer classes such as cake decorating, quilting, scrapbooking, and the like. Local art studios may also offer extended nights where you can bring your favorite beverage and paint, do glass fusing, or even pottery.

Living the organic lifestyle can be a daunting change if you are unsure of where to turn and what to do. However, don't stress about it. Think about how beneficial it will be to switch over to a wholesome lifestyle where every aspect of your bodies are taken care of. Don't try to make all of your changes in one day. Not only do you face possible rebellion from your charges, but it is possible that even your body will rebel. In time all of the pieces will fall into place, and you will notice all of the positive changes in your charges and yourself. The whole point of living organically is that you improve yourself inside and out, and Rome wasn't built in a day.



Nannies Ask

BY STEPHANIE FELZENBERG OF BE THE BEST NANNY NEWSLETTER.

Dear Stephanie,

My MomBoss has lied to me since my first interview. I know that I need to quit but I'm unsure of how to make a clean break. How can I resign without having to tell her I'm leaving because she's treating me very poorly?

Sincerely,

Clean fscope

Dear Clean Escape,

Don't burn bridges. Your last days at your job will be the memories the mother remembers when giving job references. Hand her a letter while telling her when your last day will be. Remain professional, work hard, and don't criticize the mother or her family as you prepare to leave.

Stephanie

Ask an Agency

RYAN JORDAN OF EDUCATED NANNIES.

Ryan Jordon of Educated Nannies, a Los Angeles-based full-service nanny agency, whips up some answers to your toughest questions about nanny placement and social events.

Q. NANNYING CAN BE VERY ISOLATING AT TIMES. DOES YOUR AGENCY PROVIDE SOCIAL EVENTS FOR THE NANNIES IT REPRESENTS?

A. Educated Nannies is a full-service nanny agency that takes pride in our personalized approach for both families and nannies. Our agency provides the Live and Learn Academy, in which nannies can participate in an online seminar to learn about different monthly topics. We inform nannies of events that are going on throughout the city of Los Angeles, such as the Nanny Support Group that is sponsored by The Nanny Doctor. Quarterly, nannies also have the option to volunteer as a group. We try to promote as many activities as possible to help our nannies flourish and gain insight to our unique industry as well as to stay connected to one another.

Q. WHAT KIND OF EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND DO FAMILIES LOOK FOR IN QUALIFIED NANNIES?

A. Families in Los Angeles search for a variety of different educational backgrounds. Most of our families request a four-year college degree and at least three years of professional nanny experience. Some families request that the nanny speak a second language or have 21 early childhood education credits. Lately we have been getting requests for nannies with knowledge of Waldorf or RIE (Resources for Infant Educators). We say the more educated you are, the better! Always keep growing and learning, no matter where you are in your career.

Q. IF AN AGENCY FINDS THAT A FAMILY KEEPS CHEWING THROUGH NANNIES, WILL THEY EVENTUALLY STOP WORKING WITH THAT FAMILY?

A. To be honest, that doesn't happen with our agency. We conduct home visits with the family to fully understand the dynamics of their household and their childcare philosophies. We gently guide them through the process. When we interview nannies, we clearly communicate the needs and expectations of the family. If the nanny is interested, they do a trial period with no pressure. If it's a match, great! If not, then we send another candidate. We rarely send more than 3 candidates to interview for the position, as you can't have that many "perfect" fits. Our families typically hire the first or second nanny they meet.

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION YOU WANT TO ASK AN AGENCY?
EMAIL INFO@NANNYMAG.COM.

Nanny Nightmares: How to Turn Career Disasters into Positive Experiences

BY LINDSAY HELLER.

In early 2014, *Nanny Magazine* asked readers to submit their most grueling, horrendous NannyLife horror stories. The winners (if you want to call them that) are below. How can these career catastrophes be turned upside down to become positive learning and growth experiences? We asked Lindsay Heller (you know her better as “The Nanny Doctor”) to weigh in with expert advice on how these and similar situations can be better managed for a positive experience for a struggling nanny.



DadBoss with a Temper

I worked for a lawyer Dadboss with a bad temper. One day he threw a large stuffed chair down the stairs because he was mad at his secretary and at me. It scared the children and me very badly. He could have hit one of us with that chair. He never apologized and nothing more was ever said about it.

-Kathryn from Austin, TX

Dear Kathryn,

I am so sorry that you had to experience that. It must have been frightening!

Any sort of physical violence or threat of physical violence is inappropriate and unacceptable in your work environment. If your workplace feels unsafe, you may choose to leave effective immediately or, if you feel comfortable, with notice. Also, if the scenario is one in which a child is in harm's way, there may be a need for a child abuse report to be made to Child Protective Services.

The fact that he never apologized is really secondary to the safety issue, however, it probably would have been better if you both had been able to discuss it. If it was a situation where you could have had a discussion at the time, then it may have been helpful for you as the nanny to call a meeting to discuss the event to ensure that it never happened again.

The Charge Who Cried Abuse

I nannied for four badly behaved young children, one of whom was particularly horrendous. If we were in public and she disagreed with what I said, she would scream "you're hurting me!" It was embarrassing. I wasn't hurting her; she just wanted attention. She told her mom who in turn told me she was "concerned" that I was yelling at her daughter and punishing her too severely. I eventually quit.

-Kerrie from Hudson Valley, NY

Dear Kerrie,

Sounds like a very challenging situation! I understand that you feel that since you are not physically hurting the child, this is both embarrassing and frustrating for you. That being said, of course we must always be aware of handling small children with extra care. If this child is going through something difficult, it may be helpful for both the child as well as the rest of the family to see a professional. I know some families aren't open to that approach, and at that point you would need to think about whether you want to stay or go. Also, when entering into a difficult job situation such as this, it is extremely important for the parents and the nanny to be on a unified team! Communication is key. You will want to formulate a consistent discipline plan with the parents. Reach out to the parents and set up a meeting. This will be a time to discuss the issue at hand as well as to come up with a discipline system that you all feel confident and comfortable implementing. Make sure the system is in place before you leave the meeting. On another note, if a child is making false accusations regarding your physically handling them, as a nanny you need to think about how well you are being supported by the family. If the family knows that these are false and something the child does for attention, and they are helping the child address these needs in therapy, that's one thing. However, if there is any chance that the child's false accusation could become a child abuse report against you, you may want to consider ending that position. This may be a controversial stance, but those types of accusations can seriously derail your professional nanny career.



The \$4 Meltdown

My tipping point was when I agreed to babysit at my usual (underpaid) rate of \$9/hour so my employers could have a date night. After four hours out, they came home and DadBoss paid me \$40. MomBoss was so upset she grabbed the money and tried to convince him to give me exact change. I couldn't believe they were fighting in front of me over \$4.

-Sarah from Columbus, OH

Dear Sarah,

How terribly uncomfortable! Unfortunately, these types of scenarios are all too common. Even though that was a bad experience, I am sure that you learned a lot about how you would approach it differently going forward. My first piece of advice would be to never compromise your rate with a family. When nannies put themselves "on sale," they almost always feel devalued from the start. Furthermore, with a family who is asking to get your services for a discounted price, one would expect that they will continue to be sort of stingy when it came to details like giving you change or not tipping you. They also will not value you as a professional, and that will come out in how they treat you, for example, not coming home when they told you they would, not paying on time, etc. At the start of any work relationship, including occasional babysitting, it is best that you have clearly communicated your expectations regarding rate, specifying hourly and overnight rates as well as start time, end time, and duties and responsibilities. That way all parties know the agreement they are entering into prior to commencing the relationship.

The Invisible Parents

I once worked for a high-profile family with four kids. The last straw was the trip on the private jet to L.A. for the weekend. I was left for hours at a time without knowing where the parents were or when they'd return. It was such a disaster that I only lasted a week.

-Amber from Seattle, WA

Dear Amber,

Thank you so much for sharing your story! First of all, let me say that working for a high-profile family in and of itself is synonymous of a very challenging professional career. Duties may include a fast-paced schedule, complicated communication, a high level of demand, and myriad extra responsibilities. While it may seem glamorous from an outside perspective, these positions can be extremely challenging beyond what is recognizable to the outside world. These jobs are truly not for everyone! When entering into these types of jobs, it is always important to establish an appropriate mode of communication from the beginning. Before the job begins, it is crucial to understand what the day-to-day will look like while your family is out of town. Moving forward, I'd suggest requesting a written example of what a week in the life of that family may look like. Even though it's likely each week is very different, it's necessary to get a feel before starting to work for this family, particularly when they'll be out of town. Additionally, I'd suggest communicating with the nannies that this family has worked with beforehand, if applicable. Alternatively, I'd reach out to other nannies who have worked for high-profile clientele and see how they have combated similar issues. There are families out there who do communicate effectively despite their busy schedules, so the right fit is out there for you. Don't give up hope!





Getting Rid of Naptime if Kiddo Isn't Ready?

BY STEPHANIE MAGRISSO. PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY TANG.

Nap time. For many nannies, it's the customary routine of lunchtime, straighten up, take a deep breath, prepare for the rest of the day, and then break. For your charge, it's time to recover from the day's activities, rest his or her constantly growing body, and recharge. So what happens when your boss declares "it's time we cut naps" and inside, you know, it's just not time.

"I would request that she has quiet time in her room for at least an hour. Nap time for me is a combination of a break, clean up/organization time, and prep for the rest of the day. It's a chance to recharge for everyone," says San Antonio-based nanny Jada Pickett.

This dilemma boils down to communication and trust. As a nanny, we are expected to clearly correspond not only day-to-day happenings but also the overall outlook of our charge. Our boss depends on us to not only provide this information honestly but trusts this input

has the best intentions.

Leslie Kendall Dye, a nanny-turned-mother from New York City, says to "Tell your MomBoss that if your charge falls asleep in the afternoon, his circadian rhythm isn't lying. Often, naps make for earlier bedtimes, anyway. If she is not persuaded, I say let the kid sleep if it happens, even if you no longer have an organized ritual surrounding naps. This may be the happy compromise."

Ultimately, your MomBoss and Dad-boss are in charge. They may have the final say in how their child's day should progress, but does that mean they always know what's best? It's important to strike a happy compromise amongst the adults that care about a child the most. A healthy conversation can be the first step along the path to a happy daily routine.

What would you do if confronted with this #NannyLife dilemma?

The Nanny

Sunday, August 10, 2014

Nanny Eats Child!!

In a small town just south of the Chicago border it is reported that a child have not allowed reporters to enter their folk

Why I Was Terrified to Hire a Nanny

BY CHRIS JOHNSON.

FOR THIS ISSUE WE'RE SWAPPING OUT OUR MANNY COLUMN WITH A REAL-LIFE HORROR STORY FROM A DIFFERENT TYPE OF MALE'S PERSPECTIVE: THE DADBOSS! FIND OUT WHAT KEEPS ONE DAD UP AT NIGHT. DUN. DUN. DUN.

My wife and I knew from the start that we were going to hire a nanny for our baby girl. Our careers wouldn't allow for either of us to stay home and we wanted the one-on-one attention and flexibility that a nanny allowed. But that didn't make the idea any easier to swallow. I had read the headlines. "Nanny Kidnaps Infant," "Nanny Steals Diamonds," "Nanny Eats Child." Maybe that last one was a figment of my imagination, but I was sure that if it could happen, it would happen. And it would happen to us.

My wife did not share in these fears. She had done enough babysitting in her early years to not fear the idea of or fret over someone coming into our house and watching our most precious possession. She didn't even prescribe to fears of husband-stealing nannies. And thus, it was my fears, and my fears alone, that caused us to procrastinate in the inevitable nanny hunt until just 3 weeks before baby was due. She bugged me, and she begged me, and she sweet talked me, but my excuses won out and there we

were, 37 weeks pregnant and no nanny in sight. It wasn't until her first contraction that I was finally willing to set up interviews with the nannies we had been recommended to by friends.

And so the week of interrogation began. We met with nannies of all ages, sizes, and experience levels. None of them met my standards of perfection. And to be quite honest, I don't think any of them would have accepted the job had we offered. My wife was fully convinced that I scared every single one of them away. But was it really my fault that they couldn't all calculate long division in their heads? My baby was going to be smart, and they needed to keep up!

With just one week to go, I came home and my wife informed me that we had hired a nanny. I was enraged. Who was it? Was it one of the ones we interviewed already? I told her I didn't approve of any of them! It turned out, she had gone behind my back for one last interview and this one, she promised, was a keeper.

As upset as I was that I wasn't a part of the process, I was glad that she was happy and I simply held my breath for our daughter's future.

Turned out my wife was right. Our nanny is perfect. Well, not perfect, but I guess I wouldn't want her that way anyways. She leaves dirty dishes out some days, comes in late every once in a while, and misplaces things all the time, but she undoubtedly loves our little girl with more than her entire heart and has taught our daughter patience, kindness, and responsibility. We are coming up on her five-year anniversary and I couldn't imagine having missed out on her because of some silly fear.

So you see, nannies, it isn't just you who paces the floors over interviewing. On the other side of the hiring fence, there are just as many nerves and nightmares, but in the end things seem to find a way of working themselves out.



The "It's Only Another Beer"
Black and Tan

8 oz. pilsner lager
8 oz. stout lager
1 frosty mug
1 icy road
1 pick-up truck
1 10-hour day
1 tired worker
A few rounds with the guys

Mix ingredients.
Add 1 totalled vehicle.

Never underestimate 'just a few.'
Buzzed driving is drunk driving.

What Is Wrong with the American Education System?

BY MARLA KILFOYLE.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARY TANG.

Members of the group known as the Bad Ass Teachers Association (BATS) Marla Kilfoyle, Melissa Tomlinson, and Dr. Yehuru Williams have something to say about public education reform, the decaying infrastructure of our nation's schools, and the other problems standing in the way of teachers doing what they signed up to do: teach. How can nannies unite with parents and teachers to help save the American public education system?

Dr. Mark Naison, a professor of African American studies at Fordham University, and parent activist Priscilla Sanstead founded the Bad Ass Teachers Association (BATs) as a Facebook group in June 2013. Uniting teachers, administrators, and educational professionals across all grade levels and disciplines, the group presently has over 40,000 members in 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 2013, respected author and activist Diane Ravitch recognized the group as one of the best educational activist organizations in the nation.

BATs has a bone to pick with the Department of Education. The new programs and emphasis on things that don't really matter puts undue stress on teachers, and no doubt these issues are the concerns of students, parents, and caretakers—that's you, Nanny—as well. Common complaints of these stakeholders include classroom overcrowding, teaching to the test, aging and potentially unsafe buildings, and unreasonable requests for teacher accountability, just to name a few.

HIGH-STAKES TESTING

Historically, teachers and schools used

assessments to inform their practice and to help create interventions that would assist special needs students. In other words, they were a means to an end. With the introduction of federal education programs like the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 introduced during the Bush Administration and Obama's Race to the Top contest, assessments became the end itself to the detriment of more holistic forms of instruction. As a result of these programs, we now have an education reform movement at the federal level telling educators that frequent testing is better for students.

The Department of Education can tell us however many times they want that all these tests are good for students and teachers, but education professionals know better. Test scores alone produce an incomplete portrait of a student's ability and a teacher's effectiveness. In defiance of significant research on the value of differentiated instruction, the new federal mandates have turned our classrooms into test preparation centers. Many parents across the nation are documenting how testing is now dominating their children's academic experience. Some of the more egregious examples include reports of children (as young as third grade) sitting for up to

10 days of state testing with 10 hours of seat time. This does not include three days of field testing for test companies who are making state tests and often ask districts to field test exams for them (for a total seat time of another 13 hours), and students may have to sit for up to 2 "local" exams used to evaluate their teachers (another two hours of testing). To add insult to injury, the tests these children take are rarely returned to teachers in enough time for a teacher to effectively use the results to create individualized instructional plans for students.

LB,* a veteran teacher in New York, says, "I don't think I have ever despised a governor more in my whole life on earth, 59 years," than when 14 days were lost to state testing and 20 "fabulous" teachers were put on improvement plans because of faulty test results. LB says the governor "sold his soul for charter take-overs in New York."

MONEY TALKS

The reality is that the testing that we have seen invade our schools since the beginning of Race to the Top is not about helping children, it is about evaluating teachers and making money for test companies. The educational testing movement we have seen explode in the last several years is not about students, teachers, or public education; it is about corporate profit. Several wealthy corporate entities have realized they can make billions in the last market frontier: public education. Pearson Testing, The College Board, and The Gates Foundation, to name a few, stand to make billions off the backs of our children. The more useless tests they thrust upon public education the more money they make. We humbly ask nannies and parents to join with teachers in asking why—if the purpose is truly improving students—there is no provision for the timely delivery of detailed results that would help teachers assist their students. In the absence of a clear rationale that conforms to accepted educational research and practice we have to ask why we are doing all this testing.

QUESTIONABLE EVALUATION POLICIES

In addition to increased student testing, Obama's Race to the Top initiative





Make sure you're educated about the system before you send your charges to school this fall!

required that states seeking funding adopt teacher evaluations based on student test scores, which the Department of Education deceptively framed as “teacher accountability.” Although the specific model varies from state to state, one thing is common between all models. A teacher’s value is reduced to how well his or her students perform on those yearly assessments—yes, those same assessments that are never returned. The growth of student scores, in many states, is also used to evaluate the principal, and in many cases to decide whether or not a school should remain open.

The research on this subject is quite clear. Student performance on high-stakes tests are not an effective evaluation of teaching. A better model for evaluating effectiveness would have to incorporate other factors, such as mentoring, school leadership, and innovation, all of which are difficult to track.

THE EXODUS OF TEACHERS

Frustrated by both the assessment and evaluation models that have left many veteran teachers branded as “ineffective” and facing termination, many teachers are now voluntarily leaving their jobs. This is unfortunate when one considers the loss in human capital and experience this exodus represents. The current solution of bringing untrained teachers from Teach for America into the classroom, however, is not the solution. Teachers and caregivers alike share a desire for professional development and teacher training programs, strong new teacher mentoring programs, and school administrators who seek to develop master teachers. Teachers nationwide agree that the current atmosphere of evaluating teachers on test scores has produced an atmosphere of fear, distrust, and punishment in our school classrooms. This will not create teachers that are more effective and has never

been substantiated as a valid measure of effective teaching.

THE DECAY OF SCHOOL BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURES

The price of meeting new testing mandates does not come cheap. The trend of diverting monies from renovation and construction projects is happening all over the country. The Los Angeles Unified School District has recently come under national scrutiny to launch an iPad initiative. The district created an initiative to equip all students, teachers, and administrators with iPads through the financial diversion of voter-approved bonds. JC,* a teacher in the district, cites over “50,000 documented, backlogged repairs” totaling \$12-15 billion, and wonders why “the superintendent, Josh Deasy, spends \$1 billion on iPads for testing.” Meanwhile, students in that district are forced to learn in an environment that includes crumbling walls, broken ceiling tiles, flooded

classrooms, and exposed electrical wiring.

Ignoring the need for a safe school environment undermines our schools’ and our children’s futures. Studies have shown that substandard physical environments are linked to truancy and student behavior issues. There are so many other possible influential factors that a district has no control over in a child’s life that it becomes a great injustice when a school makes the decision not to control what is possible in order to increase a child’s academic success rate. The neglect to wisely distribute school funds and to divert money from needed structural repairs completely disregards the responsibility that schools have to their students.

GROWING CLASS SIZE AND SHRINKING MORALE

Class size is another one of those decisions that districts have control over but often seem to disregard. Again,

weighed down by the struggle to meet new federal mandates to obtain a portion of the Race to the Top funds, districts across the nation are ignoring the proven facts and consistently reducing staff numbers while increasing student-to-teacher ratios in the classroom.

"I work in an urban school district. When I started 10 years ago, my class of fourth graders was a manageable 17 kids. Today, I am lucky if I can get below 25," says RD,* a teacher in Florida. "I have trouble making it through lessons and have so many disruptions."

Class size reduction is one of the only four evidence-based reforms that have been proven to increase student achievement. Consistently, these students who benefit from smaller class sizes are the same students who need the most support to achieve academic success—the minority and poor sections of our populations. The benefits of class size reduction also include an increase in the development of motivation and self-esteem, a decrease in dropout rates, and an increase of grade point average and performance on national assessments.

It is with wonderment that we watch schools all over the nation request waivers in order to increase the class size within districts. Pictures of classrooms with too few desks to accommodate students have flashed

across the nightly news. The amount of attention that a teacher is able to give any one student decreases as the number of students in the classroom increases. Already overburdened teachers and staff are being asked to manage classrooms where the rise of behavior issues is increasing as students become frustrated with the lessening amount of instructional one-on-one or small group attention. To accommodate larger class sizes, teachers are unable to differentiate instruction to the extent that it would benefit the most students and are forced to teach to the middle of the group, leaving higher- and lower-level learners unable to receive the education that they are entitled to, one that meets their learning needs.

ARE SCHOOLS EVEN SAFE ANYMORE?

Over the past few years, a great deal of discussion has taken place about how to make our schools more secure. Given a rash of school gun violence like the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, most of this discussion has focused on the more obvious forms of safety—including questionable calls in some states to actually arm teachers. In his famous hierarchy of needs, Abraham Maslow posited that basic physical safety had to be fulfilled before all other needs to ensure people could reach the highest order of growth: self-actualization.

If we want the American public schools to improve, we need to consider all the ways in which our schools are equally unsafe. When students face the psychological torment of high-stakes testing, funds are diverted away from music and arts programs that help provide differentiated models of instruction and budgets are cut to reduce staff, including counselors and nurses, clearly basic safety is compromised.

This does not even speak to concerns over the physical plant of many schools. In some areas, this is even becoming the basis for legal action. The Education Law Center of New Jersey has been fighting the state to fulfill commitments to renovate Trenton High School in order to provide a safe school for the students. The current trend of school districts and state governments making conscious decisions to undermine safe learning environments violates the very essence of public schools to educate young people to take their place in the work force and be able to engage in a participatory democracy. We Americans—students, parents, nannies, teachers—need to reclaim our schools and restore a model of public education that is safe, sane, and satisfactory for all.

*Initials only have been used.



The Diaper Bag



HOPE SKINNER IS A NANNY FOR FOUR CHARGES IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA. AFTER HER YOUNGEST CHARGE RECENTLY STARTED DAYCARE, THE JOB OF HOPE'S DIAPER BAG SHIFTED FROM A CARRYALL TO A CARRY-EVEN-MORE.

"It was an emotional ordeal for both MomBoss and myself as we prepared to leave my charge in the care of almost strangers," Hope said of her charge's first day of daycare. "The morning of the new daycare routine we rushed out the door like any other in a disorganized chaos. What we did remember to bring, however, was the diaper bag."

Let's have a look inside Hope's diaper bag, a Longham Champion bag that Hope calls "hardy and durable, waterproof, malleable, and squishy enough to fit into small places".

"As a nanny for small children, this bag has become my best friend."

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SPARE GARMENTS

1. Jackets
2. Onesies
3. Gym clothes
4. Diapers



EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

1. Emergency information
2. First aid kit
3. Road map
4. Blankets



SNACKS

1. Yogurt squeezies
2. Granola bars
3. Drinks



ESSENTIALS

1. Wipes
2. Spare batteries
3. Toiletry bag
4. Phone charger



ALTHOUGH HOPE CALLS HER DIAPER BAG "HEAVY TO LUG AROUND" BECAUSE SO MUCH IS CONTAINED WITHIN IT, SHE WOULDN'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT IT. "THE DIAPER BAG HAS BECOME MY BEST FRIEND AND SAVIOR IN DESPERATE TIMES OF NEED," HOPE SAYS. SHE TAKES HERS WHEREVER SHE GOES WITH HER CHARGES: THE ZOO, THE AQUARIUM, FLIGHTS, AND BEACH VACATIONS, TO NAME A FEW. "IN THE NANNY LIFE, IT PAYS TO BE ORGANIZED."



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