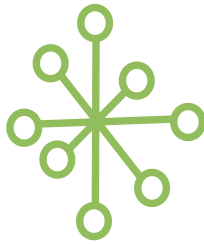


cmk

community-minded kids



**field
guide
2011**

raising community-minded kids

- ☐ start at the beginning
- ☐ nurture communication
- ☐ explore your community
- ☐ everyday ways to be community-minded
- ☐ community service project ideas
- ☐ be a change maker
- ☐ how other parents do it
- ☐ community support
- ☐ book suggestions
- ☐ local resources



Roger W. Wheeler State Beach. PHOTO CREDIT: Douglas Itkin

"No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline."
- Kofi Annan

As a parent I believe we begin instilling values in our children in our earliest communications. It starts with the first songs we sing, to the stories we read at bedtime, and the life lessons we try to teach throughout their tween and adult years. Our children learn from our family choices of where we go, who we spend time with, and how we interact with the people in our community. The actions we take in our everyday lives shape the way our children see their role within the family and the world around them. As our children spend more time interacting with people outside the home through school, sports, and other activities, they start making their own choices of how to act. Whether they are conscious of it or not, making these choices is part of their transformation from child to citizen. Every step, big or small, on their path to independence is an opportunity to contribute to and influence the world around them.

How we act in our home is an important foundation for kids to learn values. We set examples by modeling the behaviors and ideals we feel are important: How and what we talk about, the books we read, household rules, and holiday and other traditions we celebrate are just some of the ways we teach our children what we value most and how we relate to the world.

I believe that a child's family and the larger community he or she grows up in, and the institutions of that place, shape that child's desire to contribute to his or her community, a child's belief in the value of being community minded, and finally, the belief that our actions have an impact on the world around us. "Grown-ups"—parents, friends, neighbors, educators, community service providers, librarians, coaches—can connect and share stories and resources on the "how to" and the value of being a young community-minded citizen.

Taking a holistic approach recognizes the importance of our shared experiences, everyday actions and the connections we make with our sense of place, shared history, and an eye to the future. If we want the next generation of thinkers and doers to be mindful of their sense of place, and be active shapers and creators in their world, we need to come together as a community to share our ideas and best practices right from the beginning.

This first edition of the Community-Minded Kids (CMK) Field Guide encompasses ideas, resources, and examples that will guide children and families as they create meaningful connections to their communities and effect real change in the world.



Anisa Raoof

founder + publisher, Kidoinfo
parents guide for rhode island and beyond
www.Kidoinfo.com

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nurture children's communication skills

By listening and exchanging ideas, we can be more effective, compassionate members of a community. Teaching children the art of communicating their ideas and opinions as well as listening to and soliciting other people's ideas are important lifelong skills to nurture and develop.

- **Spend time together as a family.** Take turns planning family activities that appeal to all of the members of your family. It can be as simple as sharing favorite parts of the day at bedtime, going on a family vacation or adventure, or cooking supper together.
- **Tell stories, sing songs.** Tell children about your family (born into or adopted—including immediate, extended, and ancestors. Give children a sense of place and connectedness.
- **Read to your children.** Share books that show different kinds of people playing, working, and living together.
- **Talk about yourself.** Tell children about what your job is, was or what you want it to be – and why.
- **Describe your heroes.** Tell your child about the people you admire and why.
- **Share your family values** with your children and tell them why you value what you do.
- **Teach children about spirituality and religion.** If you worship, tell them what you worship and why you do.
- **Teach children respect for and tolerance** of other people's beliefs.
- **Make family meals important** and daily occasions for conversation—no TV, laptops, newspapers, homework.
- **Make a “talking stick:”** Find a stick outdoors or use a pencil or chopstick. Decorate it with beads, string and/or colored ribbons. Teach children the skill of listening and sharing ideas by taking turns passing the talking stick around the table—whoever holds the stick has the floor and no one talks until they're done and the stick gets passed.

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- **Conversation Starter Cards:** Talk to children about their day. If conversation does not come easily, start a tradition of a pass-around such as “If you could invite anyone in the world to dinner (past, present or fictional), who would it be and why?” to jumpstart the conversation. Come up with your own questions or use card games like: Table Topics: Family Edition. [www.tabletopics.com/gathering]

- **Use media in moderation.** Media in its many forms (TV, movies, video games, Internet, etc.) can be a valuable teaching tool and a powerful way to communicate and collaborate with people locally as well as from faraway cultures. Since it is hard to avoid it completely, teach children how to use media responsibly and safely.

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Three children making “peace flags.” PHOTO CREDIT: The Peace Flag Project

explore your community

If we want to make positive change, we need to first step outside our home and learn about the world around us.

Rhode Island has a history of religious freedom, was once the jewelry capital of the world, and is known as the Ocean State. Getting to know where we live, including its history and people, gives us a sense of place and teaches our children to learn about and care for where they live.

- **Get outside.** Take a walk around your block, chat with your neighbors, and point out your favorite things about where you live.
- **Be a tourist in your own town.** Imagine what it would be like to visit your town for the first time.

LOCAL RI: Begin by visiting the ri.gov website [www.ri.gov/towns] and search by town to help plan trip.

- **Visit historical sites, statues, and museums and learn about local history.** Learn about the founder of Rhode Island. Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence commemorates the life of the founder of Rhode Island and a champion of the ideal of religious freedom. Williams, banished from Massachusetts for his beliefs, founded Providence in 1636. This colony served as a refuge where all could come to worship as their conscience dictated without interference from the state. Stop by the visitor center and learn how to become a junior ranger.

- **Visit the Museum of Work & Culture in Woonsocket.** This interactive museum presents the story of immigrants who came looking for a better life in the mill towns along the Blackstone River.

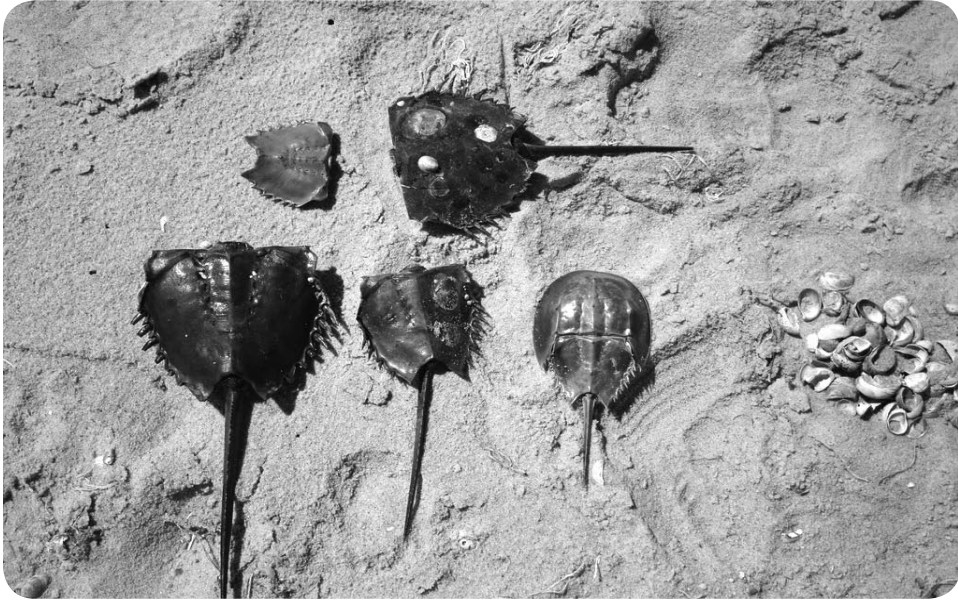
- **Visit the Touro Synagogue in Newport.** The first synagogue built in the United States was the site of an historic address regarding religious tolerance delivered by George Washington.

- **Tour Rhode Island community farms.** Take your children to visit one the five community farm sites, which provide fresh produce for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Although volunteers must be 14 years or older to volunteer in the Food Bank itself, the community farm is a fun way for younger children to join in the effort.

LOCAL RI: www.rifoodbank.org/Programs/RICommunityFarm/tabid/189/Default.aspx

- **Learn about other cultures** by attending local festivals, seeing their crafts, sampling food, and listening to music.

- **Watch independent films and films from other countries** to learn about other families, customs, clothing, food, and geography. Discuss with your children what is similar between your family and theirs.



Charlestown Town Beach. PHOTO CREDIT: Anisa Raoof

- **Go for a hike** at the beach or in the woods.

LOCAL RI: Audubon Wildlife Refuges: Audubon maintains nearly 9,500 acres of natural habitat across Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts. Most refuges are free and open to the public and have groomed trails for hiking and nature study.

Join Rhode Island Families in Nature for free hikes planned in a different location each month.

Download the Official Rhode Island State Parks Great Outdoors-Pocket Ranger to your smartphone.

- **Learn about the Rhode Island waterfront.** Visit India Point Park featuring 18 acres of open space along a 3,600-foot shoreline. Located at the confluence of the Seekonk and Providence Rivers where they widen into Narragansett Bay.

ACTIVITY: Visit the stoneware mosaic mural “Past Points” designed by artists Mika Seeger and Peter Geisser. See how many things you can identify. Take a stroll around the park, reading the educational signs that explain the history of the waterfront.

everyday ways to be community-minded

Reading and talking about community is important, but sometimes it's true that actions speak louder than words. So use this list of suggestions, things to do, places to go, and changes we can make as a springboard for learning about and supporting our community. Whether your family wants to help the environment, reduce wasteful consumption, or better care for others, get out and take a stand—and help your children take a step toward becoming more civic minded.

environment

Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. Teach children moderation and the importance of reducing excessive consumption (e.g. packaging, fuel, resources). Teach them how we can reuse or repair what we already have. Show how we properly dispose of things once it can no longer be used.

LOCAL RI: Learn more at Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, home of Rhode Island's Central Landfill and Materials Recycling Facility. [www.rirrc.org]

Keep stuff out of landfills. Donate old toys, clothes, books, and furniture to local libraries, shelters, and organizations in need. Swap outgrown or unwanted clothes, toys, and books with friends.

Save a tree. Recycle newspapers, magazines, and cardboard. Check out books from the library instead of buying new.

Buy second-hand to save money and conserve resources.

Start an "Art Trash" box. Save cardboard tubes, selected broken toys, etc., for craft projects.

ACTIVITY: Make "Treasures from your Trash" with your kids.
Use glue/magnets to create a robot, a house, etc.

Spare the air. Walk or bike when you can instead of driving. Carpool when possible.

Save electricity. Turn off lights, appliances, and computers when not in use.

Teach water conservation. Turn down the temperature of your water heater and turn off the water while brushing teeth. Shorten your showers.

Pack a trash-free lunch (or as close to trash-free as possible) with reusable containers. Fill reusable water bottles instead of buying disposable plastic. Use a lunch box, not paper bags.

Help keep your local park or beach clean. Rhode Island state beaches require you to carry out your trash. Stock your car with extra trash bags and gloves.

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animal protection

Create a backyard habitat that is friendly to wildlife. Create sheltered spaces that protect wildlife from predators. Build a birdhouse. Find more ideas at the National Wildlife Federation website.

DETAILS: www.nwf.org

food - gardening - hunger

Teach children about the food to table cycle. Discuss what resources are used to bring the food to our table—automobile, boat, plane? Be a locavore: Eat foods grown locally and in season to reduce carbon footprint.

ACTIVITY: Have children pick their favorite food and help them map how it gets to their plate.

Learn about victory gardens. Plant a garden at home or join a community garden.

LOCAL RI: Find a community garden in Rhode Island on the Farm Fresh website:
[www.farmfresh.org/food/communitygardens]

Start a backyard compost pile. Biodegradable waste can be composted into rich fertilizer for your garden and keeps waste out of landfills.

social change

Take your children with you when you vote. Explain what you are doing and why. Teach kids the value of democracy, the concepts of citizenship, and civic responsibility.

Set up a gift registry. Reduce unwanted gifts and support local businesses by inviting friends and family to contribute to a gift certificate at your child's favorite store.

Honor handmade. Teach the kids the value of making things by hand. Make cards or presents at home. Support others that make items by hand.

Practice yoga. By definition "yoga" means "to yoke". Teachers highlight this by bringing together body and mind, as well as all the students practicing, and ultimately connecting the students to the larger world, of which we are all a part. This practice builds a solid foundation upon which to act from a community-minded perspective all the time.

Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Do something for a neighbor like bake cookies or take in their trash.

Activity: Track acts of kindness online using "call to action" cards from Boom Boom.
[www.boomboomcards.com]

community service project ideas

Take an active role in making change. Donate your time and/or resources to projects and ideas most meaningful to your family. Create your own family service project or connect with local organizations to find volunteer opportunities. If your children are too young to volunteer, there are other ways to help a special cause or support an organization.

animals

Help a local animal shelter by collecting and donating needed supplies, such as newspapers, old towels and blankets, dog and cat food and toys, books about animals and their care, pens, pencils, and office supplies. Make homemade dog biscuits or volunteer time at the shelter.

Feed the birds during the winter. Our feathery friends need a little extra help finding food in the cold. It is also loads of fun to watch.

ACTIVITY: Make a simple bird feeder by rolling pine cones in peanut butter and bird seed.

arts + culture

Make art and share it. Make a piece of artwork and donate it to a local nursing home or hospital.

Help a young artist. Collect new or slightly used art supplies and paper and donate to a school, after-school program, or local arts organization in need.

education

Book exchange. Collect gently used books and donate to classrooms, libraries, or local shelters.

Literacy help. Older children can volunteer to read with preschoolers or adults whose first language isn't English.

nature + environment

Park cleanup. Adopt a favorite outdoor spot, such as a park, trail, or playground and commit to visiting regularly to help keep it clean for the community. Bring gloves and bags for trash cleanup.

Adopt an Audubon Wildlife Refuge. Visit often, get to know your Audubon naturalist, help with cleanups, and much more.

International coastal cleanup. Organize a group of friends and/or family members to clean up the beaches. Families can help make a difference by joining in on the worldwide cleanup that occurs every September.

social service

Collect food, warm clothing, toys, or personal care items for the needy. Make the collection into a party or set up a donation box at home, your kids' school, or a community center to collect items. Have kids help pack items and deliver to shelters.

Hold a stuffed animal drive. Collect new or in good condition stuffed animals and donate them to a homeless shelter for new arrivals.

Write letters and/or assemble care packages for someone in need or crisis. Service men and women, senior citizens in nursing homes, and children in a local hospital appreciate these simple acts of kindness.

Establish a pen pal project with senior citizens in a nursing home, children in a local hospital, or children in another country.

Start a Giving Jar. Collect spare change in the house and/or designate a portion of allowance each week to go into the jar. At the end of the year, help your children research and select an individual or organization in need and donate the money.

Operation Give. Send much-needed items (e.g. toys, school and medical supplies) to children in war-torn areas through Operation Give, a nonprofit that collects and distributes toys and necessities to kids in Iraq and Afghanistan. FedEx provides free shipping.

DETAILS: www.operationgive.org

Set up a "give" registry. As an alternative to receiving gifts, consider asking friends/relatives to donate to a cause of your choice. Changing the Present is an online organization that allows your family to set up an online giving registry where friends and family can easily make donations to a specific charity that has significance to your child.

DETAILS: www.changingthepresent.org

Suitcases for kids. Donate new or gently used suitcases along with personal care items, toys, and stuffed animals to children in residential placement. Most foster children carry their belongings in plastic garbage bags, a degrading message for any child.

DETAILS: The RI Council of Resource Providers for Children, Youth, and Families (RICORP)

Locks of Love. Anyone can donate their long locks of hair (at least 10 inches long) to Locks of Love, which turns donated hair into wigs for children with cancer and other medical conditions that trigger hair loss.

DETAILS: www.locksoflove.org

sports

Reuse a shoe. Athletic shoes take about 1,000 years to biodegrade. Donate old athletic shoes to be reused to create sports surfaces like basketball courts, tennis courts, athletic fields, running tracks and playgrounds for young people around the world.

DETAILS: www.nikereuseashoe.com/get-involved

Help an athlete. Collect and donate gently used sporting goods to your school or youth organization that helps underprivileged kids play sports.

more community service project ideas

...from Johanna Corcoran, founder of Familytopia

Saint Elizabeth Manor

- Board Games/Card Games/Wii Games. Families are needed to play board, card, and Wii games with the wonderful residents at this live-in center.
- Intergenerational social parties on 2nd Saturdays. All ages from infants to elders, residents and their families, gather on the second Saturday of every month for an afternoon together with entertainment and refreshments. Working with the activities staff and other volunteers, families can befriend those without family members nearby.

WEBSITE: www.stelizabethcommunity.com

CONTACT: Rev. David Proctor at (401) 253-2300 x137

Judy's Kindness Kitchen

Every Sunday they prepare and serve soup and sandwiches for over 200 people. Families are needed to help prepare the food at Congregation Beth Shalom on the East Side of Providence, and/or serve the meals at Crossroads in Downtown Providence.

WEBSITE: www.judyskindnesskitchen.org

CONTACT: David Mandelbaum

Providence Ronald McDonald House

RMH needs help providing families of hospitalized children home-cooked evening meals. Your family can prepare meals at home and deliver to the house, or come into the facility and prepare the meal there.

WEBSITE: www.prmh.org

CONTACT: Linda King at (401) 274-4447

Trees 2020

Thanks to an REI Grant, "Trees 2020" (a Groundworks Providence program) will need help planting trees in parks throughout the city this spring. Spend a Sunday afternoon outside, breathing new life into a Providence park!

WEBSITE: www.trees2020.org

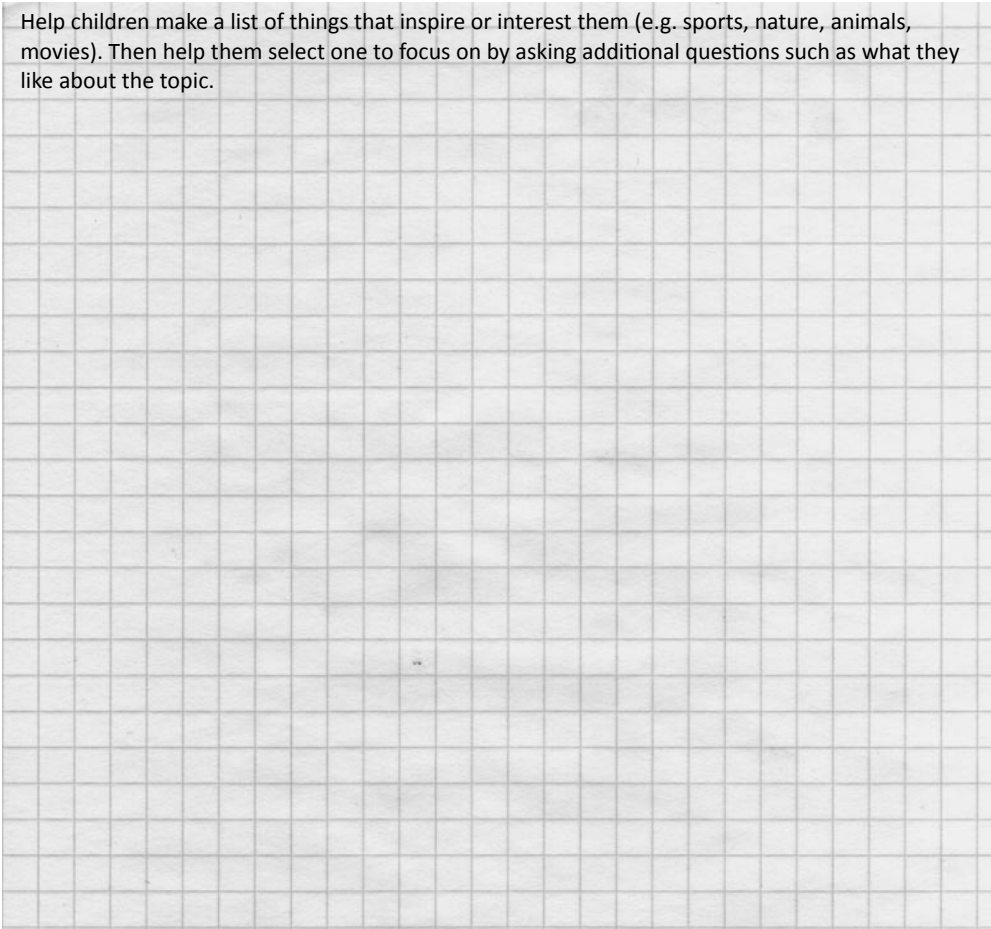
CONTACT: Ray at (401) 351-6440

be a change maker

Use this next section to help children identify what is important to them and help them make an action plan that uses their skills, interests, and resources to effect social change. Begin by asking children the following questions, then make a plan, put it into action and reflect on the outcome.

What interests you?

Help children make a list of things that inspire or interest them (e.g. sports, nature, animals, movies). Then help them select one to focus on by asking additional questions such as what they like about the topic.

A large rectangular area filled with a light gray grid pattern, resembling graph paper, intended for children to write their interests and action plans.

What needs to change?

Have your children select an area of interest and help them identify what could be improved about it. For example, if they like nature, ask them if the park they love is clean and well taken care of or is it full of trash.

TIP: These topics from Cathryn Berger Kaye's *Complete Guide to Service Learning* may be helpful:

- Education & Awareness
- Animals in Danger
- Community Safety
- Elders
- Environment
- Gardening
- Hunger
- Immigrants
- Literacy
- Social Change
- Special Needs/Disabilities

What do you need to make a change?

Ask your children what they think they'd need to make the change they've identified. Help kids learn more about the topic by reading books on the subject, contacting local organizations, or interviewing experts on the subject. Decide what additional resources are needed (e.g. money, equipment, or time).

What do you like to do?

Help children identify what skills they have and what activities they most like to do. Do they like to knit, bake, read? Help them figure out how they can use their talents to make a change for the better. For example, readers can share a book with the elderly in a nursing home, knitters can make a scarf for those in need, and chefs can bake cookies to raise money for an animal shelter.

A large grid of graph paper, consisting of many small squares, intended for children to write or draw their responses to the question 'What do you like to do?'. The grid is light gray and covers the majority of the page below the introductory text.

How was it?

During and after the project, ask your children how they feel about what they are doing or what they have learned. Talk about the experience and help them record their ideas here or in a journal. Depending on the age of your children, have them draw their ideas, write them down or be their scribe.

What happened?

What was the result of your child's efforts? Talk about how things changed and what you'd do differently the next time.

Meet the panel and moderator for the 2011 Kidoinfo Conversation:
Raising Community-Minded Kids at AS220 on May 25, 2011.
Here they share their ideas and resources around this topic.

Wendy Nilsson

Parenting has been my sabbatical...a time to reflect, regroup, and try out some new ideas gained from the perspective of being a mom. I spent most of my professional career creating communities in schools as a program director at school for at-risk middle-school students and The 21st Century Learning Center in Boston and as a consultant for the Rhode Island Department of Education for Social, Emotional and Character Education. I recently started Nurslings as a lactation and family consultant. I am also the chair and a founding member of Friends of Brown Street Park, a La Leche League Leader and member of the Rhode Island Breast Feeding Coalition. I am married to the fabulous Michael Paradiso. I have two exquisite children, Bear, 8, and Boo, 6. I am an artist who volunteers in my sons' classrooms to enrich the curriculum with art-based projects. I am an avid runner and baker.

idea + resource list:

1) Everyday things to do. I have always included my kids in everything I do before 8:00 pm when they go to bed. We make a lot of stuff and experience life together. The kids come up with ideas and we try to figure out ways to make them, like our tree house, things with clay, recycled materials. My kids learned to bake, cook, clean, and do yard work. We don't watch TV. We work on projects, read, do art, etc. We love skiing, canoeing, ice hockey, and doing sporty things together.

2) Service projects. My kids have grown up thinking that parks are their responsibility. We love working at Brown Street Park and the Providence Athenaeum together. We have also worked at Adoption RI. My little one brought his sewing machine to help the kids there make stuffies. They really wanted to help out when they learned that not everyone has a family. The whole family helps when we do projects for the park, school, the Athenaeum, etc. My sons used to attend La Leche League meetings with me and helped play with the babies.

3) Favorite local organizations. Audubon Society, Providence Athenaeum, La Leche League. We love all the local sports organized by parents and we coach and generally help out when we can: Brown Youth Hockey, led by Malcolm Starr, East Side Sports activities, Little League, and the Seekonk Swim Club are some of our favorites.

Do you have a personal mission, philosophy, or project you do with your family or part of your work?

Wendy Nilsson: Incorporate children into the natural rhythms of family life. My kids have never watched television because there are so many other things that we do, and they learned to amuse themselves rather than be entertained passively. People always ask me what I do now that my kids are in school all day. I answer: the same as before, only I don't have my little companions with me to help out. They have learned to be a part of what I do.

Catherine Carr Kelly

Executive Director, Central Square Theater and Co-Founding Director, I WAS THERE Project,
Vartan Gregorian Elementary School at Fox Point

resource list:

I Was There Oral History Project: www.IWasThereProject.org

Save the Bay: www.savebay.org

The Steel Yard: www.thesteelyard.org

New Urban Arts: www.newurbanarts.org

Central Square Theater: www.centralsquaretheater.org

Facing History: www.facinghistory.org

Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence: www.nonviolenceinstitute.org

Do you have a personal mission, philosophy, or project you do with your family or part of your work?

Catherine Carr Kelly: I have been lucky enough to work with Wendy Warlick as a co-founding director of the I WAS THERE (IWT) Project at Vartan Gregorian Elementary, the school that my 9-year-old daughter attends and that my son will attend next year. The mission of IWT is to use oral histories and the arts to engage students in learning about the history and life of their school, the Fox Point community, and the natural environment that surrounds them. IWT connects our children with the greater community through public performances, the Faces of Fox Point “living museum” in the school, and IWT blog forums. In many ways, the IWT program exemplifies my feelings about how to raise community-minded kids. I have always loved the simplicity of the adage “You don’t know how people feel until you have walked a mile in their shoes.” In IWT, our children get the chance to do just that—through their rapt attention to an immigrant dock worker’s story of the last time that he saw his mother waving goodbye on the docks of Praia, Cape Verde, and during the awkward silence that ensued when an 80-year-old Portuguese musician haltingly spoke of living past most of his friends and family. These stories enrich us and remind us of our shared responsibility to honor the past and shape the future.



Vartan Gregorian School at Fox Point. PHOTO CREDIT: Deborah Hickey

Wendy Lawton

Wendy raises money for science and technology projects at Brown University. She is a Providence resident and is active in the PTO at Vartan Gregorian Elementary School. She serves on the board for the Rhode Island Museum of Science and Art, and serves as an advisor to Woolly Productions and WRNI. With her 8-year-old daughter, Lucy, she creates community in many ways, from volunteering at Vartan, selling lemonade for Save the Bay, and writing the White House about ending war and stopping pollution. Their new project: Cooking up ways to raise school expenses for Anna, a young girl in Africa who wants to be a teacher.

idea + resource list:

- 1) Find out what your kids REALLY care about—pollution, politics, pets—and follow their passion. When hearts are engaged, good service opportunities follow.
- 2) Talk community every day. Talk about the news, what charitable appeals come in the mail, what is happening at school and what the neighborhood association is up to. When minds are engaged, good service opportunities also follow.
- 3) Inspire them. Visit [www.kidsareheroes.org/index.html] and talk with your child about the cool ways other kids are making a difference.
- 4) Show them that their efforts—of time, money, or opinions—matter. Admire the new playground you helped build. Share the results of the clothing drive. Talk with them about all the letters the Congressman received about the budget cuts—and how they helped shape their votes.
- 5) Set an example. Get active in your community, and talk with your kids about what you do, why you do it, and why you think it makes a difference.

Do you have a personal mission, philosophy, or project you do with your family or part of your work?

Wendy Lawton: Community-minded kids think outside of themselves and their families, and they have a broader sense of taking responsibility and positive action to improve their world. These kids understand that they are a part of many communities—a school, a neighborhood, a city or town, a church, a soccer team or a group of global cooking or gardening enthusiasts—and that, as a member, they should contribute. My daughter, Lucy, has three piggy banks—spend, save, give away—a system that encourages giving. We talk about what's in the news and what comes home in the mail or in the backpack, and discuss how we can volunteer, raise money, or raise our voices to save endangered species, clean up our school grounds, or help kids in need. Lucy has written former President George Bush and President Barack Obama to protest the Iraq War and the BP oil spill, respectively. They wrote back! What a great lesson: Your actions matter. Your voice is heard.

Johanna Corcoran

Johanna is a RI-based Family Enrichment Consultant and Founder of Familytopia. She founded Familytopia based on her experience returning to full-time work shortly after her daughter's second birthday. Johanna quickly realized that she was not alone in her attempts to find balance amidst a hectic work/family schedule. Recognizing that both employers and families are impacted by the stress working parents face, Johanna developed the Familytopia concept to help parents and employers address the needs of the modern family by providing inspiring workshops, parent-focused events, and supportive parent circles. Familytopia has programs at many of Rhode Island's most established employers, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, Amica, Neighborhood Health Plan of RI, and Lifespan.

Johanna lives in Johnston with her husband and six-year-old daughter.

Do you have a personal mission, philosophy, or project you do with your family or part of your work?

Johanna Corcoran: I can directly link my interest in community-based activities to my childhood. My parents were active members of our inner-city neighborhood. Growing up, I saw them protest parking lots on beautiful public space, start a neighborhood block party celebration, and contribute fundraising and artistic skills to our local community theater. They always made sure to include us kids in their community activities. We attended community meetings, distributed flyers, and made posters to help with their various projects. I was and continue to be very proud of their many community contributions.

There is no doubt that these early experiences affected my adult approach to community and the way I raise my daughter. I've made a conscious effort to involve her in worthwhile and fun community activities. From helping me at a Family Peace Table at the Peace Flag Project's "Peace Day Event," to decorating for Familytopia's "Lollipop-a-palooza" fundraiser, she's been exposed to some fun ways to give back to the community. I realized I was on the right track the other day when she came to me with an empty plastic bottle and asked if she could decorate it and put it by the cash register at one of our local stores to "collect money for people who needed food." Priceless!



Neutaconkanut Hill in Providence. PHOTO CREDIT: Tina Tryforos

resource list:

books:

The Difference A Day Makes: 365 Ways to Change Your World in Just 24 hours by Karen M. Jones, founder of www.benevolentplanet.com

Me to We: Finding Meaning in a Material World by Craig and Marc Kielburger, founders of Free the Children.

How Full Is Your Bucket? by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton. There are both adult and children's versions of this book, and it's a great way to reinforce kindness in our interactions towards each other, making a better community!

I Can Make a Difference: A Treasury to Inspire Our Children by Marian Wright Edelman, founder of The Children's Defense Fund

websites:

www.yeskidzcan.com: a website that "helps parents, educators, and community/faith leaders engage kids (grades K-5) in community service."

Jae Wyllie Willard

Jae is an interior designer, artist, activist, environmentalist, and mother of two, who has loved living in Rhode Island for the past four years. She recently founded New England Nannies, connecting families with quality childcare that is affordable and flexible. She serves on the board for the Until the Violence Stops Festival, raising awareness to end violence towards women and girls. She also serves on the board of the Rhode Island Crisis Assistance Center and is the RI Chapter Leader for Dining for Women. When she isn't working or chasing around her 5-year-old son, Owen, and 2-year-old daughter, Teagan, she enjoys teaching other parents some of her household tips from cloth diapering to making your own baby food and multipurpose cleaners.

idea + resource list:

1) Talk about your community with your kids. Don't be afraid to tell them about people who are less fortunate or who need your help. We include talk about the subject in our daily routine and start by saying, "How lucky are you that...you have this yard to play in (or...you get to eat the blueberries we just picked or...we just went hiking). Then we finish by explaining how some kids don't have backyards, get to pick blueberries, or go hiking. It makes them appreciate the little things in life.

2) Use multimedia to teach them how people live in other parts of the world and why they need our help. (You should look at these things prior to sharing with your kids to make sure they are age appropriate.) YouTube, Google Images, blogs, and even Facebook can have a strong impact.

3) For birthdays and holidays, we give our kids one present and then make a donation in their name. As they get older they start to really think about where they want the donation to go.

- Some charities send regular emails/updates/newsletters that you can share with your child and follow the progress.
- Have your kids pick at least one new present they receive each birthday/holiday to donate. Better yet, take them with you to drop it off.

4) Show your children how happy and important the charity work that you do is in your own life.

5) Get out and do something! It could be as simple as picking up trash in your neighborhood or local park/playground. Volunteering to ring the bell during the holidays for the Salvation Army is another example of something easy for kids to do.

6) Pick a charity to raise funds for and hold a bake sale. Some stores or businesses will let you have the bake sale out front and might even match the donations you receive.

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7) Donation jars: Take a jar from your recycling bin, wash it, and have your kids decorate the outside with images/words from a charity of their choice. Then have them collect donations in your neighborhood or wherever they want to take their jars with them.

8. Help your kids go through their toys and clothes quarterly, and take them with you to drop them off at the Salvation Army or other charity organization. They can learn about how the organization works by dropping off the goods and then picking out something small from the store to buy.

9. Most importantly, follow through with what you do!

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Jason Thompson of Rag and Bone Bindery makes sandwiches with his family for Judy's Kindness Kitchen.

PHOTO CREDIT: Jason Thompson

community partners

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2010-11 Conversation Season Sponsor: The Gordon School

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Soul at Work
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Raising Community-Minded Kids Friends: Sing With B Music: Barbi Beyer
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For over twenty years, Gordon eighth graders have spent May working in local nonprofits and community organizations.

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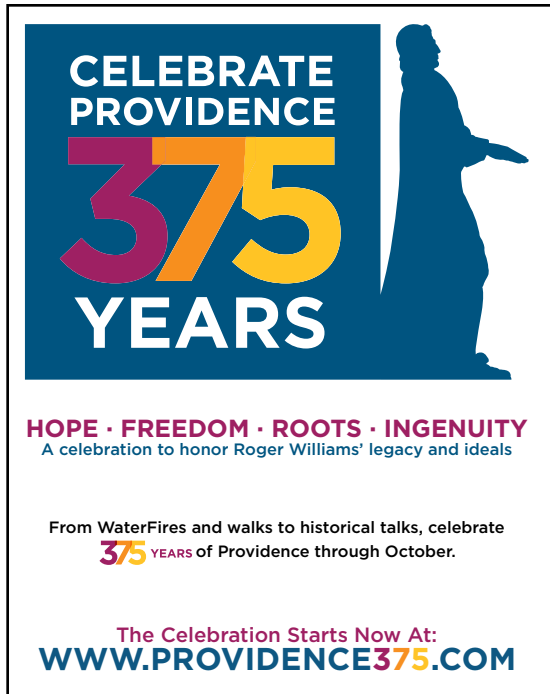
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"We instill the values of caring for our community in all we do. In an all girls environment, there are many opportunities to find causes that are of interest specifically to girls, like the baby blankets." – Jan Cooney, Pre-Kindergarten Blossoms Teacher

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250 Lloyd Avenue, Providence | (401) 831-7350 | www.mosesbrown.org | facebook

book suggestions

Visit www.Kidoinfo.com for book descriptions.

From Lindsay Shaw, children's librarian at the Providence Athenaeum

PICTURE BOOKS: VERY YOUNG

Good Morning Digger by Anne Rockwell

PICTURE BOOKS: AGES 5 AND UP

Henry Works by D.B. Johnson

Zen Ties by Jon J. Muth

Zen Shorts by Jon J. Muth

Mr. Lincoln's Way by Patricia Pollacco

Bears Day Out by Michael Rosen

Yoko's World of Kindness by Rosemary Wells

A Chair for My Mother by Vera Williams

Something Beautiful by Sharron Dennis Wyeth

FICTION: *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen

NON-FICTION: *Kid Blinks Beats the World* by Don Brown (history)

We Were There Too! by Phillip M. Hoose

Girls Who Rocked the World by Amelie Welden

PARENTING: *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*
by Richard Louv

From Anisa Raoof, publisher of Kidoinfo

PICTURE BOOKS: *People* by Peter Spier
The Lorax by Dr. Seuss
The Star Belly Sneeches by Dr. Seuss
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein
Whoever You Are by Mem Fox
Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney
The Teddy Bear by David McPhail

RESOURCE BOOKS: *The Complete Guide to Service Learning* by Cathryn Berger Kaye.
A Kids' Guide to Climate Change & Global Warming by Cathryn Berger Kaye
Step by Step! by the Mosaic Youth Center Board of Directors
with Jennifer Griffin-Wiesner
The Kid's Guide to Social Action by Barbara A. Lewis
The We Generation: Raising Socially Responsible Kids by Michael Ungar

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From Cheryl Space, youth services coordinator and library program specialist at
Rhode Island Office of Library & Information Services
Bonnie Lilienthal, Providence Public Library
Aaron Coutu, Greenville Public Library

PICTURE BOOKS: VERY YOUNG

Mama Panya's Pancakes by Mary Chamberlin
How to Heal a Broken Wing by Bob Graham
Rose and Mr. Wintergarten by Bob Graham
Good-bye, Curtis by Kevin Henkes
You Can Do It, Sam by Amy Hest
The Big Green Pocketbook by Candice Ransom
Mama Provi and the Pot of Rice by Sylvia Rosa-Casanova
Bear Feels Sick by Karma Wilson

PICTURE BOOKS: AGES 5 AND UP

Sam and the Lucky Money by Karen Chinn
A Castle on Viola Street by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan
City Green by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan
Grandpa's Corner Store by Dyanne DiSalvo-Ryan
Chestnut Cove by Tim Egan
Boxes for Katje by Candace Fleming
The Gardener by Sarah Stewart
The Kindness Quilt by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

FICTION: *The Seven Wonders of Sassafras Springs* by Betty B. Birney
 Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo
 8th Grade Superzero by Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich (middle school)
 The Schwa Was Here by Neal Shusterman (8th grade +)

NON-FICTION: *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope*
 by William Kamkwamba
 Planting the Trees of Kenya: The Story of Wangari Maathai by Claire A. Nivola

resources for volunteering and involvement

general

Serve Rhode Island

655 Broad Street, Providence RI 02907
www.serverhodeisland.org

arts & culture

City Arts

200 Allens Avenue, Providence RI 02903
www.providencycastlearts.org

Community Music Works

1392 Westminster Street, Providence RI 02909
www.communitymusicworks.org

New Urban Arts

743 Westminster Street, Providence RI 02909
www.Newurbanarts.org

environment

Audubon Society RI

12 Sanderson Road, Smithfield RI USA 02917
www.asri.org

Farm Fresh RI

1005 Main Street #1220, Pawtucket RI 02860
www.farmfreshri.org

Groundwork Providence

8 Third Street, Providence RI 02906
www.groundworkprovidence.org

Roger Williams Zoo

1000 Elmwood Avenue, Providence RI 02907
www.rogerwilliamsparkzoo.org

Save the Bay

100 Save The Bay Drive, Providence RI 02905
www.savebay.org

Southside Community Land Trust

109 Somerset Street, Providence RI 02907
www.southsideclt.org

social change

Amos House

415 Friendship Street, Providence RI 02907
www.amoshouse.com

4-H Club

State Office - University of Rhode Island
75 Peckham Farm, Kingston RI 02881
www.4-h.org

Boy Scouts

Rhode Island: The Narragansett Council
10 Risho Avenue, East Providence RI 02914
www.narragansettbsa.org

Children's Friend

153 Summer Street, Providence RI 02903
www.cfsri.org

Girl Scouts of Rhode Island

Canal House at
125 Charles Street, Providence RI 02904
www.gsri.org

Institute for the Study &

Practice of Nonviolence

265 Oxford Street, Providence RI 02905
www.nonviolenceinstitute.org

Rhode Island Food Bank

200 Niantic Avenue, Providence RI 02907
www.rifoodbank.org

The Peace Flag Project

www.thepeaceflagproject.org

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