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On our cover:

Like so many of us, southwest Washington-based photographer **Sarah Costa** and her family go to ZooLights every year in December, to catch one of the biggest displays around. Taking pictures at night is tricky, but Costa managed to get this sweet shot of her daughter. The lights are bright, yes, but that smile outshines them.

See more of her work at sarahcostaphotography.com.



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Editor's Note

pdxparent
for the long days and short years

The holidays are upon us — and that means something different for every family. For some of you, this season is a celebration of food and family. For others, it's a chance to reconnect with their faith. For some, it's a time of stress, trying to figure out how to care for kids during vacation, or cope with difficult family members. It can be a time of hope or anger, healing or divisiveness. It is no one thing.

Neither is this city. In a city that is nearly 77 percent white, and struggling to overcome racial tensions, there is still plenty of diversity to celebrate — just consider the 100+ languages spoken by kids at Portland Public Schools. We aim to do so both in our publication and on our website. (Read our full statement of diversity and inclusion online at pdxparent.com/diversity-statement.) We are proud to feature interviews with people from differing backgrounds, volunteer opportunities to benefit people in need, and events celebrating cultures from around the world. Our goal is to build on these efforts in 2018, and continue to honor not just what we share, but what makes us different, too.



The holidays are the perfect time for your family, too, to reach out to our shared community, and celebrate what makes us different. Volunteer as a family for a new cause. Attend a cultural event with your kids — you can find a bunch in the Time Out section on page 34, and even more on our ever-popular online calendar. Hit the road to some of the destinations in this month's winter travel story, and see how things look elsewhere. Get outside your comfort zone. Really listen to what other people are saying. The world is pretty mixed-up, but we can teach our kids to build a more hopeful future.

Whatever your traditions, and however you celebrate, may your family have the happiest of holidays, from all of us on the editorial team at *PDX Parent*.

Denise Susan Julia Alison

Head to pdxparent.com for loads more winter fun, including:

- ➔ Outdoor outings
- ➔ Holiday gift ideas
- ➔ Lights, Santa, and other festive happenings

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Check out other ideas for family environmental volunteering here: pdxparent.com/environment-volunteer-kids

Good Deeds: PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE

For decades, the vacant lot at the corner of SE 87th Avenue and SE Malden Court was an eyesore in the Lents neighborhood, choked with invasive Himalayan blackberries, strewn with trash and a magnet for unsafe activity. Finally, in 2015, neighbors had had enough — **they reclaimed the space, planting a community orchard intended to serve as a source of fresh produce for locals and an accessible green space for local schools to use for environmental education programs.**

These days, there are over 250 native and fruit-bearing plants there, and plenty of room for more — which is where your family comes in. **Every third Saturday of the month from 9 am-noon, there's a work party at the orchard, with tools, gardening materials, coffee and snacks provided.** They take December off, but work parties are planned for January 20 and February 17. All you need is water, closed-toed shoes and a willingness to help steward the orchard, whether by harvesting, weeding, mulching or planting. Find them at greenlents.org.— *Julia Silverman*



MIC MARBLECK



MICHAEL IOFFE

Kid to Know: The Conversation Starter

Recent Lincoln High graduate **Michael Ioffe** knows how to get people talking. And for his efforts he was awarded \$36,000 from the Helen Diller Family Foundation. When he was 15, Michael started **TILE, Talks on Innovation, Leadership and Entrepreneurship**, a nonprofit that held educational conversations between students and local innovators and entrepreneurs. His first guests included Micah Camden of Blue Star Donuts and Little Big Burger fame, and former CEO of Learning.com Bill Kelly. “After a successful first season of talks, I realized that the series could be expanded worldwide,” says Ioffe. “We’ve been able to create venues for conversations between students and local luminaries in 200 locations and 32 countries, everywhere from right here in Portland to a war zone in Sana’a, Yemen. We hope to reach 1 million students through 2018.” Ioffe is attending Babson College in Massachusetts, where he plans to study finance and architectural history with an eye toward tackling the problem of affordable housing. Most of the money he won will go toward his education, but he also plans to use some of it to grow TILE even further. —

Denise Castañon

Find more spots for winter adventures at pdxparent.com/snow-days

TOP 5 ...

Sledding Spots



- 1 **White River Sno-Park** is a Portland classic. Everyone you know will be there too.
- 2 Go tubing at **SkiBowl East** – the price of the indoor kids' playground is included in your ticket.
- 3 **Little John Sno-Park** is better for a year with lots of snow, since it's at a lower elevation, but bonus points for proximity to Hood River brewpubs.
- 4 **Oldman Pass Sno-Park** in SW Washington is an off-the-beaten path choice.
- 5 Park for free on US 26 and head to the hill that slopes down to **Trillium Lake**, near Government Camp. – J.S.



Apps We Love: EASY ALLOWANCE

Raise your hand if this has happened to you: It's late on a Sunday after a packed weekend, and your kid looks up and reminds you that you've forgotten to give them their allowance ... again. And it's been six weeks, actually, so now you owe \$12. Per kid. Cash only, please. But really, who carries cash these days? That's where the handy RoosterMoney app comes in. You can set up an account for each kid, and record how much money goes into it each week. Kids lusting after a particular item? Take a picture of it and upload it to the app, along with a price tag, so kids can see exactly what they're saving for. Or, if you're out and about and they absolutely have to have an item, debit it from their online account. Kids can manage their account, sorting their money into "spend," "save" and "share" categories, and creating goals for most-wanted items. Ambitious parents can even turn on the chore-tracking function, and set up the app so that grandparents and other doting relatives can contribute to the allowance fund. Free for iPad, iPhone and Android. – J.S.

Gear Guide: Hey, Sleigh!

Want to check out all the fun places in this month's Top 5 sledding spots? We hate to state the obvious, but first you'll need a sled. We've got you covered, with picks for all ages.

Lucky Bums Toddler Pull Sled

Kids ages 3 and under will love hitching a ride on this cheerful sled, which features a high back and sides for extra support, a sturdy seat belt, an extra-long pull-rope for you and cold-resistant plastic that won't crack in the cold. \$49.99. At REI.



L.L. Bean Kids Pull Sled and Cushion set

Looking for an heirloom? L.L. Bean has it covered, with this timeless wooden pull sled and super-comfy seat. The cushion is made of water-resistant nylon and is good for hauling kids or groceries. \$149. lbean.com



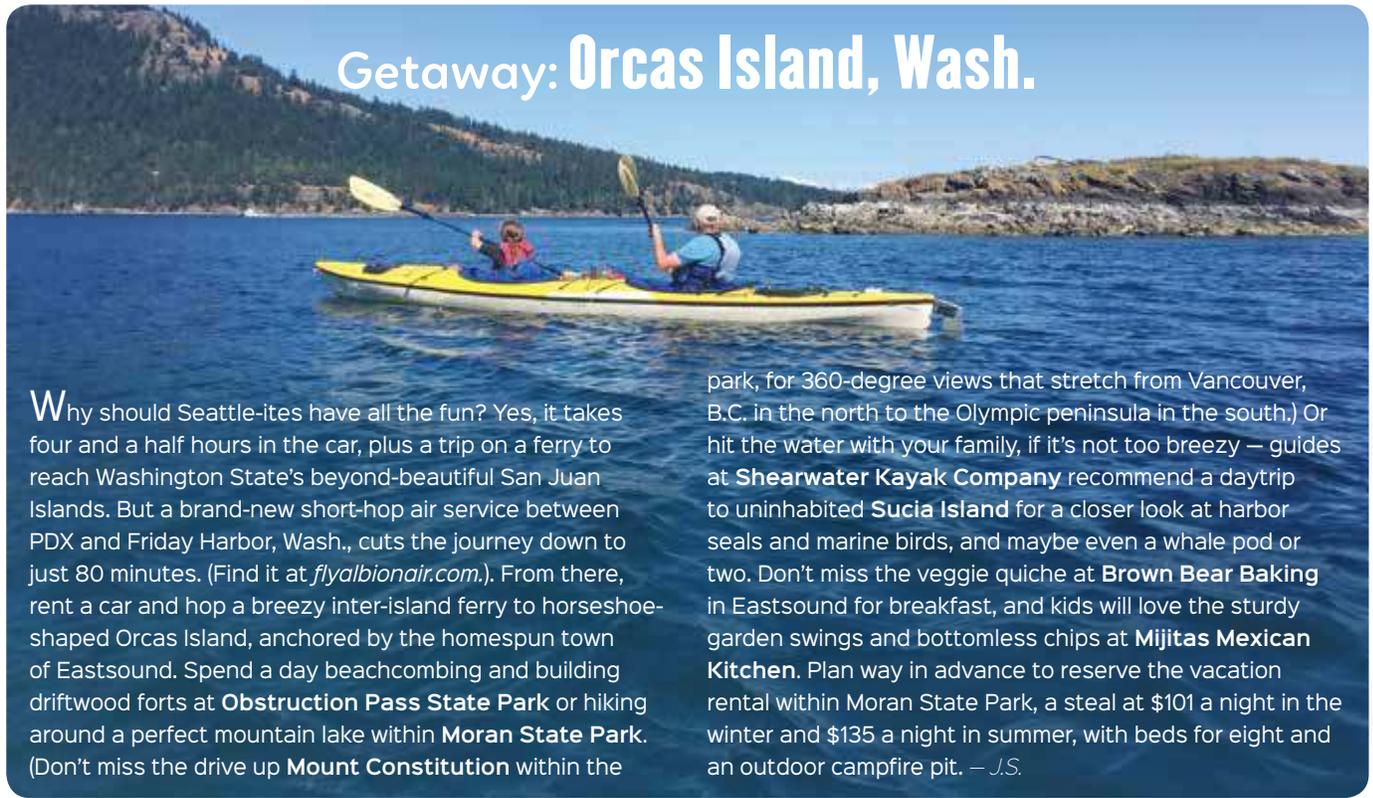
The ESP Sno-Twin Toboggan

It's just right for older kids who are ready for some thrills on the hills. Two kids (or one adult) can ride this durable plastic number together, with a diamond-polished bottom for maximum speed. \$14.99.



At Dick's Sporting Goods. – J.S.

Getaway: Orcas Island, Wash.

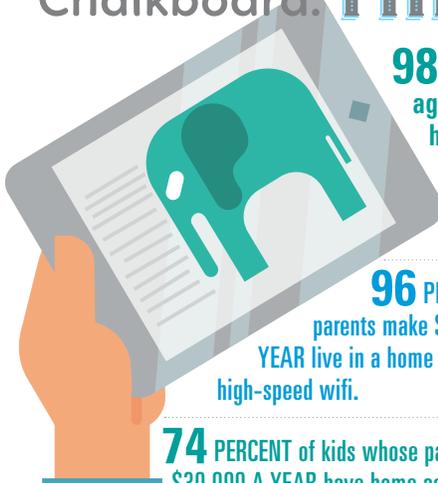


Why should Seattle-ites have all the fun? Yes, it takes four and a half hours in the car, plus a trip on a ferry to reach Washington State's beyond-beautiful San Juan Islands. But a brand-new short-hop air service between PDX and Friday Harbor, Wash., cuts the journey down to just 80 minutes. (Find it at flyalbionair.com.) From there, rent a car and hop a breezy inter-island ferry to horseshoe-shaped Orcas Island, anchored by the homespun town of Eastsound. Spend a day beachcombing and building driftwood forts at **Obstruction Pass State Park** or hiking around a perfect mountain lake within **Moran State Park**. (Don't miss the drive up **Mount Constitution** within the

park, for 360-degree views that stretch from Vancouver, B.C. in the north to the Olympic peninsula in the south.) Or hit the water with your family, if it's not too breezy — guides at **Shearwater Kayak Company** recommend a daytrip to uninhabited **Sucia Island** for a closer look at harbor seals and marine birds, and maybe even a whale pod or two. Don't miss the veggie quiche at **Brown Bear Baking** in Eastsound for breakfast, and kids will love the sturdy garden swings and bottomless chips at **Mijitas Mexican Kitchen**. Plan way in advance to reserve the vacation rental within Moran State Park, a steal at \$101 a night in the winter and \$135 a night in summer, with beds for eight and an outdoor campfire pit. — J.S.

JULIA SILVERMAN

Chalkboard: THE STATS ON SCREEN TIME



98 PERCENT of kids from ages 0 to 8 live in a home with mobile devices. That's up from 52 percent just six years ago.

96 PERCENT of kids whose parents make \$75,000 OR MORE PER YEAR live in a home with access to high-speed wifi.

74 PERCENT of kids whose parents make LESS THAN \$30,000 A YEAR have home access to high-speed wifi.

48 MINUTES: Average amount of time per day that 0- to 8-year-olds spend on mobile devices.

42 PERCENT of children now have their own tablet device — up from 7 percent four years ago and less than 1 percent in 2011.

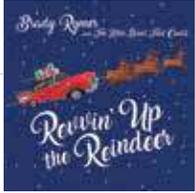
We're officially in the age of peak mobile. For the last six years, San Francisco-based nonprofit Common Sense Media has been surveying kid media choices and consumption. During that period, the average amount of time kids spent in front of a screen each day hasn't changed that much — about two hours — but which screen they're glued to has. **These days, about 35 percent of that time is spent in front of a phone or a tablet.** (The survey shows 72 percent of families with young children have Netflix or a similar streaming subscription service; only 65 percent have cable TV). Back in 2011, only a tiny sliver of kid media usage was on a mobile device. What's more, the survey of 1,400 families from varied backgrounds found that against universal pediatric recommendations, **nearly half of children ages 8 and under "often or sometimes" play video games in the hour before bedtime**, and 42 percent of families leave the TV on in the background of their homes during waking hours, whether or not anyone is watching. Why does this all matter? Well, the use of devices has both good and bad points — schools, even preschools, are using more and more technology in the classroom, finding that it can be a helpful teaching tool. But unfettered screen time, which is more easily available to kids than ever thanks to mobile devices, can increase obesity and anxiety rates, pediatricians say. — J.S.

SOURCE: THE COMMON SENSE CENSUS: MEDIA USE BY KIDS AGE ZERO TO EIGHT, SAN FRANCISCO, CA: COMMON SENSE MEDIA

Playlist: SOMETHING for EVERYONE

Music is the gift that keeps on giving. This holiday season you'll be able to find an album of cool kids' music for everyone on your list.

For Hip Christmukkah Tunes:

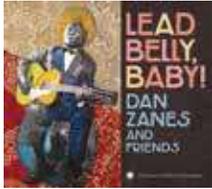


Brady Rymer and the Little Band That Could's *Revvin' Up the Reindeer*, an album of swingin' holiday tunes – the title track and *Untangling the Christmas Lights* are especially reminiscent of '90s

hitmaker Brian Setzer. And songs *Holiday Jam*, *Hanukkah Rocks* and *Rainbow Candles* mention winter holidays other than Christmas. At amazon.com.

For Your Parent Friends Who Swear They Hate Kids Music:

Lead Belly, Baby! by Dan Zanes and Friends brings the music of 12-string guitar master Huddle "Lead Belly" Ledbetter to a new generation. This isn't "kids music," but rockin' good folk music that littles and their grown-ups can appreciate. At folkways.si.edu.



For the Goofiest Kids You Know: On his solo album *Songs from the Monkey House*, Recess Monkey lead singer Jack Forman offers a pack of silly tunes inspired by real-life conversations with children. *Star Wars* fans will get a giggle from *Yodeling Yoda* and picky eaters will identify with the song *Blue Cheese*. At amazon.com.



For Kids Who Gotta Dance: Kindie queen Laurie Berkner reimagines some of her most popular tunes for the kids of club kids with *Laurie Berkner: The Dance Remixes*. My kiddos especially loved *Where Is the Cake?* and *Rocketship Run*. At laurieberkner.com. – D.C.



Ask Dr. Corey:

Q: My baby had a fever the other night, and it spiked at 103, which seemed scary high. I called the advice nurse at our pediatrician, and it eventually went back down – but how high should a child's fever be before we take them to the emergency room? Does it change as kids get older?

A: What a burning question you asked! Fever in children is something that can be very scary to a parent and as common as it is, it can be difficult to find good advice on what to do when fevers pop up.

One reason we are so afraid of fever stems from the days when preventive health measures like vaccines didn't exist. Nor were germs understood as the cause of disease until the 1860s.

To further complicate matters, measures like how high a fever gets or how long it lasts as a predictor of a more serious illness have changed dramatically over the last couple decades.

As it stands today, neither the height of the fever, nor length of fever are accurate predictors that a child has a more severe illness versus a less severe one. That's not to say that children with fever aren't at higher risk for things like dehydration and that it doesn't make them feel good. All in all though, as a culture, we probably overtreat fever. There is also mounting evidence that fever may actually be good for us and help us fight off illnesses faster.

As practical advice to parents, I usually start with a definition of fever. The medical community has helped spread the idea that 98.6° Fahrenheit is a *normal* temperature and that anything above this is a fever. However, this is not totally accurate. 98.6° Fahrenheit is an *average* temperature in children, meaning that a large portion of kids will normally run either higher than this number, or lower than this number.

I would define fever as 100.4° Fahrenheit or more.

Now that we know how fever is defined, what do we do about it? I generally do not recommend medicating fever unless your child is pretty uncomfortable or not drinking well and at risk for dehydration. Tylenol (acetaminophen) should be used for children under 6 months of age as a fever reducer and ibuprofen (Motrin or Advil) may be used for children 6 months of age or older. Generally, it's not a great idea to give acetaminophen to small babies under 2-3 months of age unless you've checked with your doctor first.

OK, now we know what a fever is and what to do about it. So when do you call your child's doctor? Any time you are concerned of course, especially if you feel something isn't quite right with your child. Also any baby under 4-8 weeks of age with a fever warrants a call to your doctor or an office visit sooner rather than later and immediately for babies with fever under 4 weeks of age. It's not that the fever is necessarily dangerous to babies that age, but we think about them a little differently than older children with fever.

Thanks for a great question! 🌈

Dr. Corey Fish is the founder of Pacific Crest Children's Urgent Care. He and his team specialize in high-quality, compassionate medical care for infants, children and adolescents. He attended the University of Washington School of Medicine and did his pediatric residency at Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas in Austin.



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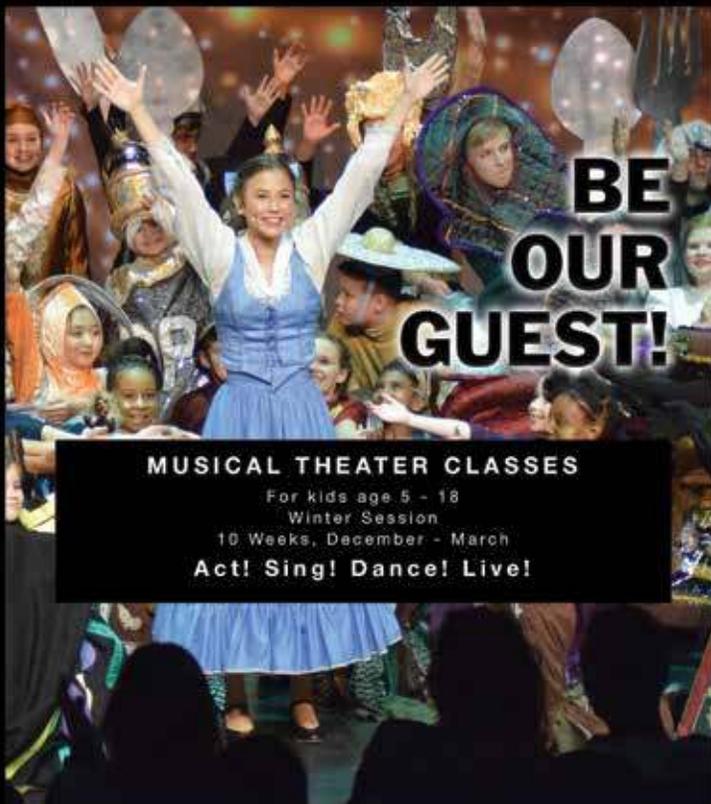
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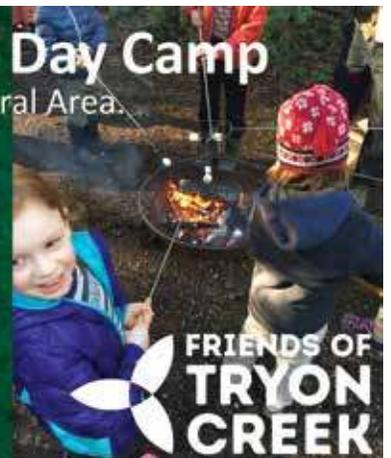
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BY JULIA SILVERMAN AND DENISE CASTAÑON



GREEN TOYS



JELLYCAT



DJECO

AGES 0-3 » **1** We don't think we've met a toddler who doesn't get excited when they spot a fire engine on the street. So the **Green Toys Fire Station Playset** is sure to be a hit. Bonus: The sturdy set is made from 100 percent recycled plastic in the US. For ages 2 and up. \$49.99. At Hammer and Jacks and Eco Baby Gear. **2** Looking for a cuddly friend for your baby to snuggle? **Jellycat's Bashful Blue Elephant** is the perfect pick (since we do love our Oregon Zoo elephants here). For ages 0 and up. \$23.50. At Posh Baby and Thinker Toys. **3** What's the toy that's always snapped up at Tiny Tots playtime at the library? The drum. This beautifully decorated wooden **Animambo Hand Drum** from Djeco lets your little one keep the beat at home. For ages 2 and up. \$20.99. At iSpark Toys and Hammer and Jacks.

WHERE TO BUY » All stores in Portland, unless otherwise noted » Annie Bloom's Books: 7834 SW Capitol Hwy. • Chil
 • Hammer + Jack's: 6416 SE Foster Rd. • Huckleberry Kids Rooms: 6018 SE Stark St. • iSpark Toys: 925 NE Orenco Station Loop,
 • Oodles 4 Kids: 7727 SE 13th Ave. • Piccolo Mondo Toys: 4768 NW Bethany Blvd., C5 and 12345 SW Horizon Blvd.,
 • Red Castle Games: 6406 SE Foster Rd. • Seahorses PDX: 4029 SE Hawthorne Blvd.

AGES 3-5

4 **Mad Mattr** is a super-stretchy, gluten-and-toxin-free dough that never dries out, even when shaped into Lego-like building bricks. \$10.99 and up. At Thinker Toys, Tinker Maker Toy Store, Seahorses PDX and iSpark Toys.

5 The experts at local toy stores tell us that kids can't get enough of **Squishables**, the huggable, Japanese-inspired stuffies, which come in wacky designs like sushi and doughnuts. \$19 and up. At Oodles 4 Kids, Piccolo Mondo and Kazoodles.

6 Buck the PDX anti-umbrella, muscle-through-it ethos and deck your kid out with **Holly and Beau's color-changing umbrellas**. It almost makes the rainy season fun. Almost. \$22.95. At Thinker Toys.

7 Stealthily help kids improve their balance and coordination with the **Mini-Micro Scooter**, an easy-to-use, pint-sized scooter that kids can steer by using their body weight.

\$79.99. At Polliwog, Mudpuddles, Posh Baby and Thinker Toys



KENDAMA USA

3

Looking for more book picks? Powell's hand-picked some of these favorites for us! pdxparent.com/2017-holiday-book-picks



PENGUINRANDOM HOUSE

9



11



MAD MATTR

4



ASMODEE NORTH AMERICA

10



MICRO KICKBOARD

7



SQUISHABLES

5



HOLLY AND BEAN

6

AGES 6 AND UP

8 Fidget spinners are so last year. The cutting-edge counselors at Trackers Earth Portland know what's up, and they've pegged **Kendama**, a wooden skills toy, as the next big thing. \$14.99 and up. At Finnegan's, Child's Play and Thinker Toys.

9 Don't take our word for it that you should buy **All's Faire in Middle School**, the newest graphic novel from former PDX resident Victoria Jamieson. Ask *The New York Times*, which called the Renaissance fair-themed work "effortless," "tremendously satisfying," and overall "brilliant." \$20.99. At Powell's and Annie Bloom's Books. **10** Which came first — no, not the chicken/egg conundrum, but, say, the development of Frankenstein's monster or the invention of the tea packet? **Timeline**, a fiendishly clever trivia game, has you build a timeline to figure it all out. From \$14.99. At Red Castle Games and Thinker Toys. **11** Did the summer's total solar eclipse have as big an impact on your kids as it did on ours? Keep that curiosity about the cosmos brewing with the **Discovery duvet set** from PDX newcomer Huckleberry Kids Rooms. The clever design sends your kid off to bed as an astronaut set to explore the solar system. \$79.

Gifts of Experience

Get the kids something they'll never forget.

FOR THE GRANDPARENTS + OTHER FAMILY

» Wave them away from the battery-operated toys or the hand-embroidered all-white outfits for the baby. Instead suggest a gift that keeps on giving, like a yearlong **membership to the Portland Children's Museum**, which will stand you in good stead during the long, rainy winter ahead. Or they can take your kiddos over to **Smartypants** in NoPo for an **adult/child crafting workshop** (make fun stuff like dino-themed terrariums or mosaic stepping stones for the garden.) **3** If your kids are more musically inclined, tip the grandparents off to a series of **violin lessons** at **Bennett Suzuki Violin Studio** in SW Portland. Kids as young as 22 months can learn how to make beautiful music.



OREGON COAST AQUARIUM

TAKE A TRIP»

We love camping as much as anyone, but sometimes, it's nice to let someone else do the cooking. Get your family a long weekend at OMSI's **Camp Hancock** in Oregon's high desert country, or at **Camp Gray** on the central Oregon coast and you'll make new friends, learn new stuff, and eat tasty food.

More info at Omsi.com. **1** If you're a cycling family, consider signing everyone up for next summer's **Cycle Oregon family weekend**. You get to cruise the Oregon countryside and the kids can ride alongside you. More info at cycleoregon.com. **2** If you're looking for one night of up-close-and-personal magic with the animal kingdom, consider a **family sleepover at the Oregon Zoo** or the **Oregon Coast Aquarium**, where they even throw in s'mores and hot chocolate for the pajama party.



CYCLE OREGON



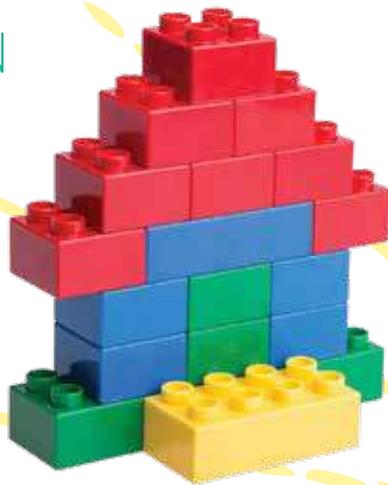
EDIE BONNETT



EMERSON PRESENTS

FOR A NIGHT OUT ON THE TOWN

4 Big, buzzy performances are headed our way this winter. Treat your littles to tickets to **Peppa Pig Live** or **Daniel Tiger Live** at Keller Auditorium, both coming this spring. For older kids, splash out on tickets to **The Sound of Music** or even **Hamilton**, coming to the Keller Auditorium as part of the Broadway in Portland series. Or become a patron of the arts and buy season tickets to one of our swell kid-oriented theater companies, like **Oregon Children's Theatre** or **Northwest Children's Theater**. **5** Got kids who are more hands on? Get early-bird tickets to **Bricks Cascade**, the biggest Lego show in this neck of the woods, March 24-25 at the Oregon Convention Center.



FOR TWEENS AND TEENS

» They're notoriously hard to buy for, and there's no poetry in an iTunes gift card. Try a punch card to one of these cool local movement spaces instead:

The Lumberyard to tide over mountain bike fanatics during the rainy season.

Skylines Ninja or **Forge Parkour** for the ones who can't sit still.

D-Block indoor skatepark for the ones who love wheels.

Mount Hood Ski-Bowl, for those who want to shred some powder all season long.

6 **iFLY** indoor sky-diving center, for the daredevils. Check out their awesome four-session flight school package, including one-one-one coaching and analysis, plenty of flight time and take-home video clips.



GIVING BACK

Everyone knows the best gifts are the ones you give. Here are four local organizations that are doing great work to support PDX-area families this holiday season.

PDX Diaper Bank

Because diapers are expensive, and babies need to be clean and dry. This great nonprofit provides diapers and wipes free of charge to families in need all over the metro area. **Give at pdxdiaperbank.org.**

Baby Blues Connection

Because we've all been there. New parenthood can be an isolating journey. These folks are here to help. **Reach out at babybluesconnection.org.**

NW Mother's Milk Bank

This Beaverton-based nonprofit works to safely collect donated breastmilk for the most fragile babies. **Find them at donatemilk.org.**

Butterfly Boxes

Two Portland moms banded together in 2016 to found this nonprofit that has put together hundreds of welcome backpacks for the refugees arriving in Portland from all over the world; they also host monthly potluck dinners where you can get to know our newest neighbors. **Learn more at butterflyboxespdx.org.**



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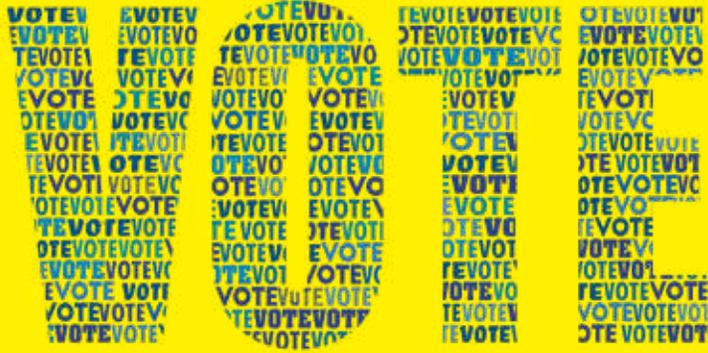
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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE



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Winter Adventures

From Albany to Zoolights, here's where to go and what to do this season with kids. BY SARAH VANBUSKIRK



Winter adventure for many Portland families means skiing or otherwise playing in the snow – and between Mount Hood, Mount Bachelor and other northwest peaks we have many great kid-friendly options. But don't let your cold weather outings, activities and travel end on the slopes. The Pacific Northwest is home to a wonderful bounty of winter family fun, some of the best of which we've collected here (as well as a few ideas farther afield), for you to explore all season long.

A is for Albany. Astoria and Ashland make for great weekend getaways, but this year try Albany for an overnight or day trip. Just an hour and a half south of Portland, this picturesque small town along the Willamette River boasts beautiful pioneer-era homes, a gorgeously restored carousel, covered bridges and plentiful riverfront parks. From December 1-15, Albany is home to the 41st annual Christmas Storybook Land, a free, family-oriented, Christmas-and-fairy-tale-themed forest wonderland, complete with model train displays, a Victorian village and North Pole with Santa. Additionally, on December 10 from 2 pm-7 pm, a tour of historical buildings will be available via horse-drawn wagon and vintage trolley rides.

B is for Bend. Explore the fabulous High Desert Museum, where kids and grown-ups will love following Oregon's history from the Native Americans to the pioneers to the gold rush and beyond. Interactive displays, many complete with in-costume, in-character staff bring history to life. Lots of native, rescued animals, including otters, bobcats, owls and porcupines, are also on view. Want more? Check out ski slopes, obsidian falls, caves, volcanic national parks, and even dog sled rides, via Oregon Trail of Dreams tours departing from the base of Mount Bachelor. [▶](#)



VIST BEND



C is for cosmic tubing. Head to Mount Hood's Ski Bowl for an after-dark tubing party, set to music and lit up with over 600,000 LED lights, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, November 25 through early May. Tubing runs range from "extreme" steepness to preschooler-friendly (all those 36 inches and above may participate) and can be ridden solo or in tandem. Kids will also flock to Frosty's Playland, which offers a warm place to play between runs, featuring slides, ball pits and climbing. Kiddie snowmobile rides and a kiddie carousel add to the fun. For those who prefer to play in the day, regular daytime tubing is also available.

Z

MOUNT HOOD SKI BOWL

F is for Florence. A little farther down the coast, you'll find Florence, which boasts gorgeous scenery whether you get sun or storms. Winter is prime whale-watching season, as nearly 20,000 grey whales swim past the Oregon Coast from mid-December through mid-January on their yearly migration from Alaska to Baja, Mexico. On wet windy days, rent a beachfront room and watch the high surf pummel the shore or suit up in rain coats to brave the weather from popular storm watching high cliff viewpoints, such as Heceta Head Lighthouse or Cape Perpetua. On a mild day, in addition to beachcombing, check out sandboarding at Sand Master Park (open through December and again beginning in March), where 3-year-olds on up can try sandboarding, sand sledding, dune buggy tours and more along miles of sand dunes.



D is for Diamond Lake Resort. What began as a small fishing lodge in the 1920s is now a year-round resort, offering a wealth of winter recreation options and proximity to the majestic natural beauty of Crater Lake National Park. Families love the hilltop snow tubing slide with a carpet conveyor to make going uphill a breeze. Diamond Lake Resort is also known for its snowmobiling, which may be done with or without guides, on single or double passenger vehicles. For those seeking a slower pace, try snowshoeing. The resort has snowshoe rentals for littles on up.

E is for Ecola State Park. Yes, we tend to think beach in the summer, but don your winter rain gear and you'll discover that, even in the cold and rain, the Oregon Coast delights all year round. Haystack Rock viewing, tide-pool exploring, shell collecting, and shoreline and coastal forest hiking opportunities abound. In fact, stormy weather can bring the landscape alive, and make cozying up afterwards with hot chocolate, fish and chips and a big bag of taffy all the more appealing. Procure that taffy from the Cannon Beach or Seaside outposts of Bruce's Candy Kitchen, where you can watch the quintessential beach confection get made. 📍

G is for glass art. Discover your inner Chihuly at NE Portland's Grace Institute, the same organization that puts on the beloved Grace Arts Summer Camps. Kids (and parents) love the opportunity to work with glass in these fun, creative workshops at the Grace Institute's Glass Studio. A variety of classes are lead by experienced class artists Nancie Mann and Lori Rowell over the first three weekends in December, including ornament making, fused-glass wreaths, mosaic glass vase and candle holders. Children 5 and older may attend with an adult; older kids can attend solo, depending on the project's complexity. The winter session, from mid-January to mid-March, will include classes on mediums including clay, illustration, animation and sewing.

H is for hot springs. Warm up at one of our region's many hot spring resorts that offer overnight stays or day use and have amenities like restaurants and bathrooms. Central Oregon's Kah-nee-tah Resort is particularly kid-friendly, with waterslides and spouting water and has spa treatments for the grown-ups. Breitenbush Hot Springs (where many guests soak al fresco) has an earthy, restorative vibe with natural hot spring pools and a steam sauna, as well as delicious vegetarian meals, yoga classes, massage and meditative forest trails. Lovely gardens surround the two well-maintained pools at Belknap Hot Springs along the central Oregon Coast. For a longer trip, try Harrison Hot Springs Resort, six hours north in British Columbia, which boasts multiple indoor and outdoor mineral rich pools at various temperatures, plus well appointed cabins and hotel rooms and a full service spa, set along scenic Lake Harrison.



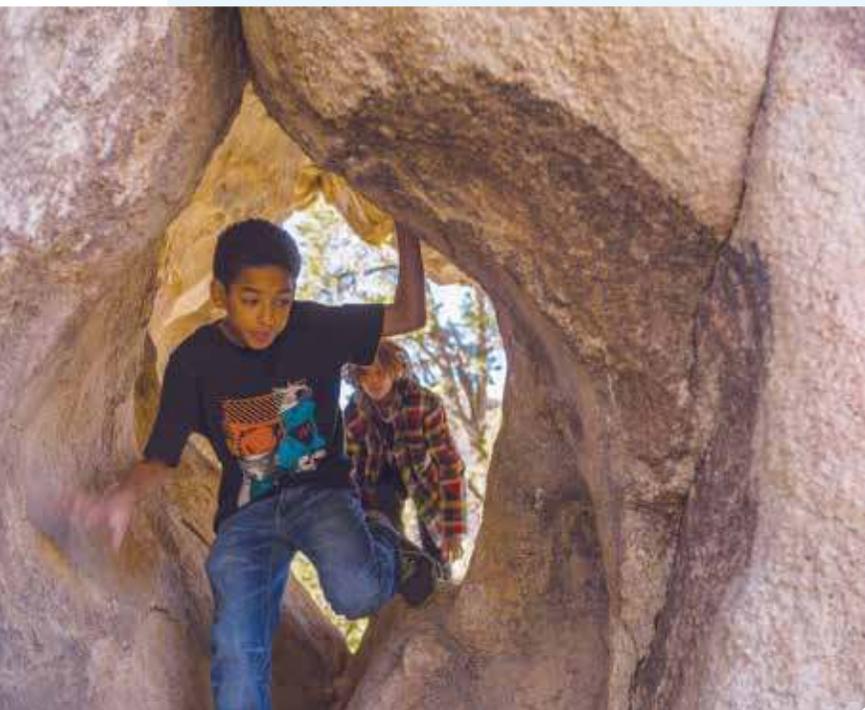


Is for ice skating. Enjoy outdoor skating at the Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink through February 19. Skates are available in toddler size 9 and up, and, yes, hot chocolate can be had as well. The rink is located across from the playground in magical Lithia Park, which little ones will enjoy exploring post-skate.

Jis for Joshua Tree. For those who seek warm and dry weather, head to Palm Springs or Palm Desert, where winter temperatures average around 70 degrees, to take in the mind-blowing desert landscape of Joshua Tree National Park. Undulating cacti, dusty, glowing hills and climbable Dr. Seussian-like rock formation make this a big hit with visitors of all ages. No food is available on site, so bring along a lunch to enjoy at one of the many picnic areas. Kids will also love the Palm Springs Air Museum, Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens, and the Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert. 

Kis for Kauai. Take a break from the gray, and relax under sunny, blue skies in Kauai, the ultimate family island getaway. You'll find lush tropical greenery, gorgeous kid-friendly beaches (Poipu is especially great), surfing, snorkeling and swimming, all without the hustle and bustle of Oahu and Maui. If you need more than a bucket, shovel and beach towel to keep your brood happy, hike the Na Pali Coast Trail, explore Waimea Canyon, kayak to the Fern Grotto, visit Wailua Falls, play at both amazing playgrounds of Lydgate Park or fly from tree to tree at one of several island zipline tours.

Lis for Long Beach peninsula. Cross over the Astoria-Megler Bridge to discover the coastal wonders on the Washington side. Stop for oysters in Oysterville and hike in Leadbetter Point State Park. In Long Beach, Wash., kids will love Marsh's Free Museum (don't miss Jake the alligator man), the Funland Family Fun Center arcade and the Cottage Bakery for doughnuts. Ilwaco's boardwalk has fish markets, restaurants and plenty of ships. The Discovery Trail is a wonderful, uncrowded paved walking and biking path that's a breeze to navigate with young bikers in tow. Cape Disappointment offers breathtaking views, yurt and tent camping, plus the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center museum and lighthouses to explore.



PAUM SPRINGS BUREAU OF TOURISM



O is for the Oregon elk.

Winter is prime elk viewing time at the Department of Fish and Wildlife's Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area in Seaside. This 2,940-acre site is home to upwards of 200 elk, which feed and rest in the meadows adjacent to viewing areas. Elk are fed onsite to keep them in the designated areas and help with the repopulation efforts. From December through February, visitors can sign up (call ahead as spots fill up) for free

elk-feeding tour wagon rides. Deer, coyote, red-tailed hawks, bald eagles and other birds also take refuge in the wildlife preserve.

M is for museum month. Stay at any downtown Seattle, Wash., hotel during February and get 50 percent off more than 40 of the Emerald City's museums and attractions. Kids will enjoy the Museum of Flight, which has a new Apollo spaceflight exhibit, the waterfront Seattle Aquarium, the Museum of Popular Culture (MoPop), as well as the fantastic play structure out front, the Chihuly Garden and Glass museum and the Space Needle. Look for fish, flowers, doughnuts and fudge while strolling through Pike Place Market as well. 

P is for Polar Express. Soak in the holiday spirit and take your family on a storybook-inspired journey to the North Pole aboard the Mount Rainier Railroad Logging Museum's Polar Express train ride departing regularly from Elbe, Washington from November 17 to December 31. The enchanting children's book comes to life on the train as Santa climbs aboard and gives each child a silver bell while they are enjoying plenty of hot chocolate and cookies.

N is for Newport. Play marine biologists with a trip to the Oregon Coast Aquarium to see otters, sea lions, sharks, fish, pelicans and more. The daily 12:30 pm behind-the-scenes tour is worth the extra fee. If your kids want more oceanic adventure, head to the Visitor Center of the nearby Mark O. Hatfield Marine Science Center or, if they'd rather be a fish than touch one, take the plunge in the Newport Aquatic Center's 25-yard indoor heated pool, lazy river and spa. Or try to spot whales as they head south to Baja, Mexico for the winter. Don Davis Park in Newport provides a great vantage point. 

Q is for quilts. Step back in time and browse the gorgeous quilts for sale and on display at Homestead Quilts and Gallery in La Pine, about 35 miles from Bend. You'll also find yards and yards of fabric, a wide array of beads, yarn and knitting accessories, as well as an art gallery stocked with handmade items from local artisans, including jewelry, woodworking and paintings. 



R is for roller skating. Yes, it's a lot of work to lace up everybody's skates and get everyone comfortable moving on wheels, but you'll find your effort will more than pay out in old-time fun. Oaks Park Roller Rink is open year-round and has learn-to-skate sessions and beginner lanes to help everyone get the hang of it. The rink also features live pipe organ music during Sunday sessions.

S is for sugar cookies. Winter is the perfect time to taste test at Portland's best bakeries – make it “educational” by buying a similar cookie at each one and rating it on a number of features, from design, size, value and frosting to crumb and taste. Start with Little T Baker, Grand Central Bakery, Lovejoy Bakers, Le Cookie Monkey, JaCiva's Bakery and Helen Bernhard Bakery. All in the name of science, of course. ↓



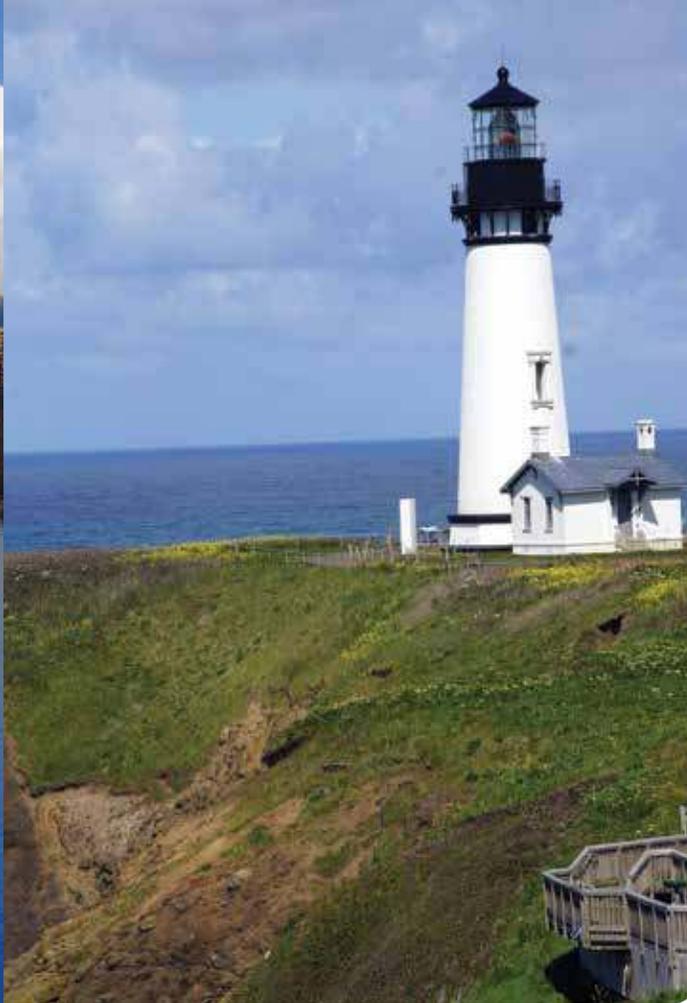
T is for Tryon Creek. Southwest Portland's Tryon Creek State Natural Area is a lush 658-acre second growth forest oasis just 15 minutes from downtown. You'll find 8 miles of hiking trails that take visitors over eight bridges and a wetland boardwalk along the area's namesake creek. There is also a 3-mile paved biking path and a paved all-abilities trail, making this an especially accessible natural area where you'll encounter Douglas fir trees, owls, beavers, frogs, woodpeckers, salamanders and more.

U is for Umpqua Valley. Take the kids on an epic safari drive through the Wildlife Safari in Winston, where the animals roam free, often right up to your window, while you drive through their enclosures. You'll see all the zoo regulars, plus buffalo, emu and cheetahs, all up close. For an additional fee you can also take camel rides. Round out your trip with stops at nearby local vineyards along the Umpqua Valley Wine Trail and at K & R Drive Inn, in Oakland, just off Interstate 5 at exit 148, to try one (or more) of their 38 flavors of Umpqua ice cream.

Sarah Vanbuskirk is a writer and editor living in Portland, with her husband, photographer Charles Gullung, and their 5 kids, aged 14 to 6, and adorable labradoodle puppy, Bucky. A former editor at *Mirabella* magazine in NYC, she has written for numerous national and local publications, including *Glamour*, *Self*, *Marie Claire*, *Shop Etc.*, *Parents*, *Nick Jr.*, *Bride's*, *TimeOut NY*, *Willamette Week* and *Portland Monthly*.



V is for **Vancouver, B.C.** Just six hours to the north, you'll find the perfect big city adventure that combines European ambiance with Canadian charm. Visit Vancouver's Science World for hands-on, interactive exhibits and awe-inspiring live science shows and the Museum of Anthropology to explore traditional and contemporary art from Northwest Native Americans and other cultures. Go to Granville Island for shopping and Grouse Mountain for skiing, snowshoeing and Skyride gondola rides.



W is for **waterfalls.** Waterfalls are just as lovely in winter without the crowds. The Eagle Creek Fire shut down much of the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge between Troutdale and Hood River this fall, but the majestic beauty of the Gorge and all those waterfalls endure. Until Multnomah Falls Lodge and the nearby waterfall-laden hikes (Bridal Veil Falls, Wahclella Falls and Elowah Falls are particularly good with kids) reopen, check out the great waterfall hikes, such as Falls Creek Falls, on the Washington side of the river, or Tamawanas Falls outside of Hood River.

X is for **X-country skiing.** Cross-country is the perfect winter recreation for those that want to relax and take in the snowy winter wonderland scenery rather than race down it. Enjoy the slower, but no less enjoyable or athletic, pace of cross-country skiing along groomed trails in the Alpine forests of Mount Hood, at Mount Hood Meadows Nordic Center, Teacup Lake Nordic Club and Cooper Spur Mountain Resort. Little kids can ride on your back or in a pull sleigh. The Teacup Youth Program, for kids 8 and up, is a great way to introduce bigger children to Nordic skiing. Otto's Cross Country Ski Shop in Sandy is the place to rent your gear.

Y is for **Yaquina Bay Lighthouse.** The historic Yaquina Bay Lighthouse, perched on a bluff overlooking the mouth of the Yaquina River in Newport, was restored as a working lighthouse in 1996 and continues to shine its light from dawn to dusk. The lighthouse, which was originally built in 1871, includes the watch room and a basement museum and is open to the public year-round. [↗](#)

Z is for **Zoolights.** Over a million and a half lights sparkle at the Oregon Zoo's annual winter Zoolights festival, held from November 24 through January 7 this winter. This beloved Portland family tradition delights young and old, year after year. Bundle up and walk the paths to see spectacular animals formed of multi-colored lights. The train ride is another fun way to take in the lights ... and don't forget the hot cocoa and elephant ears for sipping and munching along the way. [👇](#) [🍷](#)



MICHAEL DURHAM

The Great Escape

Trying out the escape-room craze with the shorter set.

STORY AND PHOTO BY JULIA SILVERMAN

Of late, my daughter has developed a fondness for mysteries and puzzles and clues, twisty tales that need unwinding. (May she recommend *The Westing Game* and *The Mysterious Benedict Society* for your next bedtime read-alouds?) She's also a budding thespian, with a flair for the dramatic.

So when planning this year's edition of her birthday party, I racked my brains for something that would combine the two, and hit on the idea of a kid-friendly escape room.

For the uninitiated, escape rooms are themed, locked rooms in which teams need to solve a series of interlocking puzzles/clues to track down the key and get out before time is up. (Not to worry cleithrophobics, staffers will let you out after an hour goes by, whether or not you've managed to solve the puzzle.)

A little googling led me to **Portland Escape Rooms**, located in a completely unprepossessing office park on the Beaverton-Hillsdale Highway. It looks like it should house only dental offices and mortgage brokers; instead, there are six different rooms, with themes ranging from "Steampunk Airship" to "Madame Neptune's Voodoo Curse."

Two of the rooms are rated as kid-appropriate: An American Revolution themed room (great fare for *Hamilton* fans and best for ages 10 and up), and the one we chose, the Arcade parlor, which is pitched at ages 8 and up.

Pro tip: Gather as many people as you can (up to 10 can be in the room at once) to help solve the puzzle. The two attendants, who were decked out in retro early 1980s garb, told us that only 40 percent of players managed to locate the key and get out of the room within the time limit. We had seven kids and three adults, and at first, we all ran about like the ghosts who chase Pac-Man, unsure of where to look. The room is decorated with throwback games, including foosball, a Legends of Zelda-inspired map, and homages to Donkey Kong and Super Mario Bros.



Pretty soon, we noticed several strategically placed locks, and deduced that some of them could only be opened by keys, while others required specific combinations of numbers. A series of puzzles revealed itself, and we were on our way. I won't give it away, except to say that it's helpful to have children with you who are intimately familiar with the different flavors of Jelly-Bellies, that iconic 1980s candy. (Cryptic, I know.)

Every so often, we'd get a video reminder of the ticking clock (and the "bomb" that was set to go off should we

fail to make our way out), courtesy of a demonic-sounding disembodied voice piped into the room, ostensibly the voice of the arcade's crazed owner. The kids seemed amused, if a little creeped out.

The three grown-ups, meanwhile, became increasingly and hilariously desperate as it became clear that despite the "get-a-hint!" cards that the kids were finding around the room, we were running out of time to find the key that would get us out of there. The two staffers whispered occasional extra tips to the kids, but were mostly hands-off throughout, which was a little frustrating — at a birthday party with a bunch of 8-year-olds, an extra thumb or two on the scale would have been nice.

About that key: Due to the fact that we were with so many kids, the door was left ever so slightly ajar the whole time, allowing for bathroom breaks as needed, and probably tamping down anxiety levels. And when the time ran out and we hadn't solved the puzzle, we broke out the birthday cake and goody bags for the kids, and, when they were all occupied, the adults got back to work, eventually finding our way to the last clue and the final key. My tip if you want to try: Everything in the room is there for a reason. Look once, and then look again. And bring birthday cake, because that can only help. 🎂

Room to Spare: Other escape room choices around PDX

Escape Games PDX in NW Portland has four rooms, including a "Portlandia" themed one, and allows anyone under age 18, so long as an adult is present with them. They're located right down the road from Portland Brewing Company, which offer discounts on post-escape room meals.

Hour to Midnight in outer NE Portland has three twisty-sounding rooms, including the Egyptian-inflected "Pharaoh's Curse." Again, kids are welcome but need to be accompanied by adults.

Julia Silverman is *PDX Parent's* editor. She is highly pleased that there are another 10 months before she has to plan another kid birthday party.

From Colombia to Cully

STORY AND PHOTO
BY ERIN J. BERNARD

To navigate the logistics of an international move, a family turns to a Portland nonprofit.



It all began with an enormous black sofa.

The secondhand couch was among the first items the Lazaro-Baquero family acquired after relocating from Colombia to an apartment in Northeast Portland's Cully neighborhood three years ago. Though it's long since been replaced, the family is still talking (and laughing) about the days when it was the only piece of furniture in their otherwise empty living room.

When building a new life from scratch, says Francy Baquero, a little help and a whole lot of faith and humor definitely come in handy.

Francy, a nurse, and her husband, Jair Lazaro, a combat pilot, loved their home country. They had good jobs and were raising two sons, Juan David and Juan Jose. But they worked long hours, and Colombia was plagued by delinquency and corruption.

"Yes, we were professionals in our careers," recalls Francy. "We made a lot of money, but we didn't have a family life."

After much prayer and conversation, Francy and Jair decided to expatriate. They considered Dubai and Florida, but ultimately settled on Portland; they'd visited during their honeymoon and were won over by its beauty and its friendly residents.

"In Colombia, they will rob you for your phone," says Francy. "[Portland] is a place where you can raise children in tranquility."

New country, new city, new language — the logistics were daunting, and for support, they turned to Hacienda Community Development Corporation (CDC). The Portland-based Hacienda CDC rents out 381 affordable housing units in the Cully neighborhood, mostly to low-income Latino families, but its services don't stop there.

"Although providing housing itself is so important, the mission of Hacienda goes far beyond a roof over our families' heads," explains Jaclyn Sarna, the organization's director of youth and family services.

Hacienda offers a host of youth and family services, plus economic and microenterprise development opportunities to renters like the Lazaro-Baquero family. Families have access to after-school programs and an onsite clinic, plus education on topics like finance, entrepreneurship, leasing laws and tenant rights.

The city of Portland's been slow to move on affordable housing solutions, but Hacienda is wasting no time: The organization has recently purchased yet another large property in Cully, where it plans to build 150 more affordable housing units.

Today, Francy is a stay-at-home mom and Jair works in a warehouse. The boys, now 6 and 16, are thriving, and the family has added a daughter — Letizia, almost 2 — and moved into a larger apartment. Their new living room boasts a cozy assortment of (non-black) chairs and sofas, art adorns the walls, and vegetables grow in a communal plot out back.

Francy and Jair talk and pray a lot about what's next: perhaps a move out of state, perhaps a home purchase (Hacienda helps with those), perhaps a U.S. nursing degree for Francy, perhaps another child.

Cully is a long way from Colombia, admits Francy, but here, she and her family are at peace: "It was the greatest blessing to come to Portland," she says. "It's very far from my home, and I miss many things from my life in Colombia, but I wouldn't change anything ... this is a country of blessings." 🌈

Find out more about Hacienda's programs at: haciendacdc.org.

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Family Supper

Chicken and Rice and Everything Nice

Diving into Peruvian food at Southeast's La Leña.

STORY AND PHOTO BY DENISE CASTAÑÓN

Usually when we take the kids out for dinner, I prep them about the meal ahead. “We’re going to have Chinese food tonight, you’d probably like the green beans and fried rice ...” But on the recent night we headed to the new Peruvian restaurant La Leña on Southeast Hawthorne, I didn’t bother. My kids had never had Peruvian food and I knew it’d be kind of hard to explain, “It’s a little like Mexican, but not really ...”

We arrived at 4:45 pm and had the place to ourselves. La Leña doesn’t have a dedicated kids menu, but I wasn’t worried, knowing that at the very least my kiddos would happily chow down on beans and rice. So we ended up ordering family-style, planning to share everything.

We tried the dish that inspired Adam Warren (former chef at Navarre) and his Peruvian-born wife, Angeline Perla, when they planned out the restaurant: pollo a la brasa, also known as Peruvian-style rotisserie chicken. The chicken proved flavorful and had just the right amount of char to it. And I couldn’t pick which of the two accompanying sauces was tastier: the tangy, bright green aji verde or the creamy salsa pollera. You can order a whole, half or quarter chicken as a combo with beans and white rice, or fries and salad (\$35, \$18, \$12). We went with the thick-cut fries and ultra-fresh salad with a sherry vinaigrette. (And ordered a large side of beans and rice, \$10.) About that rice: It’s garlicky and slightly tangy and my kiddos shoveled it in. The mashed Canary beans dressed with chicken drippings were a hit with my 5-year-old daughter as well, even though they did have a slightly spicy kick to them. She also

approved of the rotisserie chicken, asking for seconds and singing a little song to herself as she was eating: “This place has chicken and rice and everything nice.”

We also ordered the lomo saltado (\$17), Peru’s delicious answer to meat and potatoes – stir-fried hanger steak, tomatoes and onions tossed with those plank-like French fries. La Leña’s steak was intensely meaty and those fries are addictive. Vegetarians can dig into the meat-free version that swaps the beef for mushrooms. My 2-year-old gobbled up pieces of the steak, and would have eaten more if his parents hadn’t beat him to it. (Foodie win, parenting fail.)

We also tried one of the empanadas of the day (\$8). When ordering there’d been a little confusion as to what the day’s meat filling was and when it would be ready. They offer a vegetarian empanada each day, too. (Another point in its favor, La Leña is a fast-casual joint where you order at the counter and get food rather quickly.) But we ended up getting a handpie stuffed with aji de gallino – chicken in a creamy sauce – delivered to our table swiftly. The crust was perfect, utterly flaky and rich. It was easy to get both kids to try a bite. They gave a thumbs up to the crust, but weren’t crazy about the filling, mostly I think because they associate “piecrust” with dessert. But it was no problem, my husband and I polished off the rest of the empanada. Heading home everyone was full and happy. My daughter expertly summed up our experience, “This is a really good restaurant.” 🌈

1864 SE Hawthorne Blvd. Tuesday-Thursday, noon-10 pm; Friday, noon-10:30 pm; Saturday-Sunday, 4:30 pm-10:30 pm. Closed Mondays. lalenapdx.com.

WINNER WINNER CHICKEN DINNER

PDX is no stranger to South-American chicken joints.

Pollos a La Brasa El Inka serves up authentic homestyle Peruvian cooking. 48 NE Division St., Gresham. [Restaurant. elinkarestaurant.com](http://Restaurant.elinkarestaurant.com).

Las Primas is known for their Peruvian-style burger in addition to the more traditional Latin-American dishes. 3971 N Williams Ave. Lasprimaskitchen.com.

The **Polli-Tico** food cart specializes in Peruvian street food, especially rotisserie chicken. 1179 SE Tacoma St.

Cooking and baking since she was a kid, managing editor Denise Castañón loves all things food related. She lives in Southeast Portland with her husband and their 5-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son, who are budding food critics and eager kitchen helpers/mess makers.

A New Stew

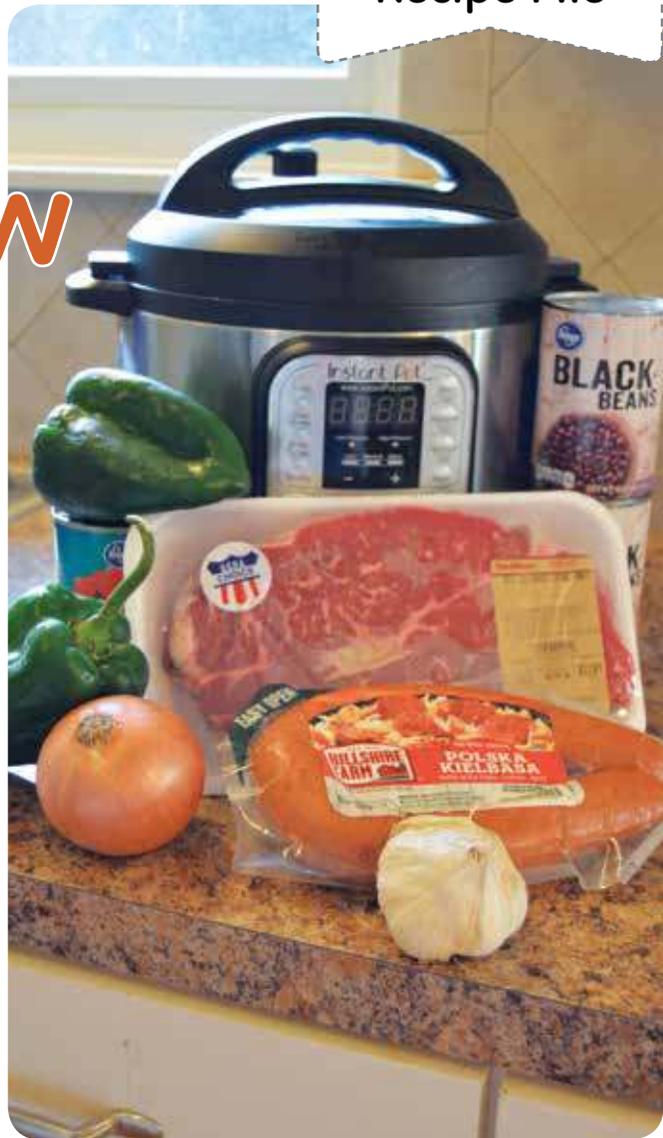
Mix up your family's beef stew with a Brazilian twist – and do it in a fraction of the time in an electric pressure cooker.

BY JOANNA SOOPER

Are you a family with a divided dinner table? Preparing one thing for the grown-ups and another for the younger family members? As a parent it makes me crazy when I cook what I think is a fantastic dinner, only to be met with the horrified stare of my newly minted 7-year-old. So I understand if you're looking at this recipe and rolling your eyes, wondering what made me think this recipe would be a good fit for a family recipe column.

Have faith! This stew has been tested by many, many kids and is a proven winner. Even my own little eye-roller loves it and recommended I share it with everyone "in my magazine." The meaty stew is backed with bright flavors and loads of umami. Serving it atop rice helps cut the mild heat brought by the poblano peppers. I hope this stew helps your family get through the hectic weeks leading up to the holidays. (And let me know how you like it, at recipefile@pdxparent.com.)

This recipe is cooked in an electric pressure cooker, such as an Instant Pot. The popular Instant Pot is the most common brand of electric pressure cooker and has spawned a huge fan base with Facebook groups, blogs and cookbooks devoted to getting the most out of it. (But I have also included slow-cooker and oven directions as well.)



Brazilian-style Beef Stew

Ingredients:

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 Poblano peppers, seeded and chopped
- 10 large cloves garlic, sliced (or 4 tablespoons minced)
- 1½ pounds chuck stew meat, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 package (14-ounces) kielbasa, halved and sliced
- 1 cup orange juice
- 3 cups water or beef broth
- 1 can (15 ounces) diced canned tomatoes, undrained
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar, or to taste
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch mixed with 3 tablespoons water

Directions

1. Add all ingredients to the pot of the electric pressure cooker, except black beans and cornstarch slurry.
2. Secure the lid on the pressure cooker. Use the "manual" function, adjust to "high" setting and adjust time to 21 minutes, then let the pressure cooker do its thing. (Or simply press "stew" setting.)
3. Do a natural pressure release (or quick pressure release if you're pressed for time). Take off lid.
4. Stir in black beans and cornstarch slurry. Reset pressure cooker to "saute" and simmer gently until thickened, about 5 minutes.
5. Serve over brown rice. Add jalapeno slices, chopped red onion, orange or lime wedges, and cilantro sprigs to taste.

ALTERNATIVE COOKING METHODS:

SLOW COOKER: Sauté onion, pepper and garlic in a pan over medium heat with a tablespoon of oil. Transfer to slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients (except black beans and cornstarch mixed with water) and cook on high for four hours, or low for eight hours. Add the cornstarch slurry near the end. Stir in black beans and heat through.

OVEN: Preheat oven to 325° F. Place all ingredients (except beans and cornstarch mixed with water) in a large dutch oven. Cover securely and cook for 2 to 2½ hours, or until beef is tender. Remove from oven. Add black beans and cornstarch slurry and simmer gently for 5 minutes on the stovetop until thickened. 🍴

Joanna Sooper is the owner of Turnip the Heat cooking school (visit turniptheheatcooking.com for more info), as well as an elementary school teacher. Her favorite things include hosting friends in her yard in Northeast Portland and adding to her secret stash of fish sauces. She has a 7-year-old son.

Time Out



speakevish

The Journey Theater Arts Group takes on that Will Ferrell-helmed modern classic, **Elf the Musical, Jr.** The show kicks off at 7 pm on **Friday, December 1** at the Washburn Performing Arts Center at Washougal High School, and continues through that weekend and the next; find more info at journeytheater.org.

FRANK WESNER

o tannenbaum

One of Portland's favorite traditions, the Singing Christmas Tree gang (headlined by Santa himself, obv's) takes over Keller Auditorium, starting in **late November and running through December 3**. Sing along to your favorite carols (but quietly, so you don't drown out the 300-plus person choir for the person sitting next to you). Find tickets at portland5.com.



PORTLAND 5

christmas spirits

Next, get up early on **Wednesday, November 29** for the Christian Youth Theater's 10 am production of **Scrooge the Musical** at the Sherwood Center of the Arts – think Dickens' seminal *A Christmas Carol*, set to music, and with a timely lesson about the true meaning of Christmas. (For more showtimes and ticket prices, head over to cytportlandvancouver.org.)



KELLEY STINE

away in a manger

All are welcome to PassinArt's production of **Black Nativity** by poet and playwright Langston Hughes. The 90-minute show retells the original Christmas story and features an all-black cast. Traditional holiday carols get a gospel twist in this powerful holiday show. **December 1-17; shows on Fridays and Saturdays** at 7:30 pm and **Sundays** at 3 pm. At Greater St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church, 3605 NE Mallory. Visit passinart.org for tickets and more information.



JAMES MCGREW

tchaikovsky time

For many local families, it wouldn't be the holidays without a trip to Keller Auditorium to see Oregon Ballet Theatre's version of **George Balanchine's The Nutcracker**. The OBT orchestra will be on hand for 10 extra special performances of Tchaikovsky's transcendent score this year. Shows start on **December 9**, and run through the 24th; visit obt.org for tickets.

tale as old as time

Disney's **Beauty and the Beast** comes to downtown's Newmark Theatre starting on **December 9**, with all the songs you already know by heart. After each matinee performance, you can meet the entire cast for autographs and pictures for \$5 a child; adults are free for the meet and greet and all proceeds go to the Ronald McDonald House. Tickets are available via portland5.com.



PORTLAND 5

shine on with santa

Mark your calendars: **Saturday, December 2** is the day many communities are lighting up their Christmas trees and bringing out the big guy in red. In **Milwaukie**, the annual **Umbrella Parade** leads into the tree lighting ceremony. Get your kids to snazz up an old umbrella and join the fun; there are prizes for the best brelly decorations, and Santa will be around for photo ops. Your reward for tramping around in the cold and rain: Free cookies, cider and hot chocolate. Parade judging at 3:45 pm, tree lighting at 5 pm. In **Beaverton's City Park and Library**, Santa and Mrs. Claus get joined by *Star Wars* and Disney characters from 4:00 pm–5:30pm, with the tree lighting at 6 pm. And be sure to swing by the **German Holiday Market** presented by the German International School, where you'll find food, crafts and live music from 10 am–9 pm at the City Park parking lot. In Northeast Portland, **Alberta Street** lights a live tree at 4:30 pm. Santa sure does get around – he'll be hanging out and there are free cookies and drinks for everyone. On Alberta at NE 18th Ave.



hooray for hanukah

Celebrate the Jewish festival of lights with (delicious!) traditional jelly doughnuts and dancing at the **Mittleman Jewish Community Center** on **December 17**, from 2 pm–4 pm. You can make some decorations for your home, and learn some Israeli dance moves. \$10 per family. Or, if you've got older kids, check out the Teen Hanukah event later that night from 6 pm–8 pm, where teens can share a meal and learn more about the holiday's deeper meanings. Free. Check out *jewishportland.org* for even more Hanukah fun.

little boxes

It doesn't get much easier than Amazon Prime for holiday shopping, but keeping your dollars local has a big impact on small businesses. Unique gift-getting events that highlight little-box businesses this season include **Crafty Wonderland**. Among the 200-plus vendors at this all-handmade show you'll find PNW-inspired gifts such as the "I like it here" mugs from Bread and Badger and A Tea



Leaf's geometric necklace, which both feature our state's silhouette. At the Oregon Convention Center **Saturday and Sunday, December 9-10**, 11 am–6 pm. No matter how bracing the weather, you'll find devoted artisans selling their wares at the **Portland Saturday Market's Festival of the Last Minute**. In addition to all the arts and crafts you could imagine, they've got a Santa booth, roving carolers and free treats. **Saturday, December 16** through Christmas Eve. 2 SW Naito Parkway. For times visit *portlandsaturdaymarket.com*. Super cute neighborhoods Sellwood and Westmoreland gear up for a big day of shopping and holiday fun at their yearly **Decemberville** event on **Saturday, December 2** from 10 am–4 pm. Neighborhood businesses offer discounts and a ton of free family-friendly activities, including arts and crafts, Santa photos and double-decker bus rides. There's even a free screening of the new Disney/Pixar flick *Coco* at the Moreland Theater at 10 am. Visit *Decemberville.com* for more information.

go. play. explore.

December 2017

a very darth vader christmas

This one is for the *Star Wars* fans young and old. The Peninsula Oddfellows Lodge and Torchsong Entertainment are throwing a **Star Wars-themed Christmas bash** complete with photos with Vader Claus, *Star Wars* Christmas caroling, face painting, a character meet 'n greet and costume contests. You'll also find intergalactic gifts for purchase and "Aunt Beru's blue egg nog." **Saturday, December 2**, noon–5 pm and **Sunday, December 3**, 1 pm–5 pm. 4834 N Lombard. Presale tickets at *squareup.com/store/torchsongentertainment*. \$8 adults; \$5 kids 5-16; 4 and under free. Tickets higher at the door.



Time Out



IMAGO THEATRE VIA FLOOR

and now for something a little different ...

Tap your feet in time to **Northwest Children's Theater's** production of *Cinderella* which offers a thoroughly modern take on the age-old fairy tale, opening on **December 2** and running through New Year's Day. (Tickets and showtimes at nwcts.org.) Take another break from the holiday-themed shows for the beloved **Frogz** at Imago Theatre – a wordless-but-somehow-hilarious show that's perfect for kids as young as 4-years-old. Show opens **December 8** and runs through January 7; more info at imagotheatre.com.

all aboard

Ride with Santa and his elves in vintage railcars on the Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation's **Holiday Express**, a steam locomotive



that whisks through Oaks Bottom along the Willamette. **Saturday and Sundays through December 17**. Visit orhf.org for prices and times. Heading to Washington over winter break? Check out the **Polar Express ride** offered by the Chehalis-Centralia Railroad Museum (steamtrainride.com). Expect hot cocoa and cookies, just like in the book. Finally, **The Train to Christmas Town** departs from Hood River **now through Thursday, December 28**. Learn more at mthoodrr.com.



CHRISTMAS SHIPS, INC.

all the lights that you can see

The upside to our short, dark December days? Amazing holiday light displays, many of which shine all month long. We never miss the parade of **Christmas Ships**, starting on **December 1** and continuing through the December 21 (though they schedule days off during that period, so check christmasships.org for the dates.) Sometimes the parade of beautiful, lit ships makes its way down the Columbia; other nights it is the Willamette. Our pick: **Saturday, December 16**, when you can watch the ships from the **Milwaukie Winter Solstice Celebration** at the city's riverfront park – they'll have a bonfire, holiday music, and tents to take shelter from any rain. Normally, seeing the lights at the **Portland International Raceway's Winter Wonderland** is done from the comforts of your car – but this year, they've set aside **Tuesday, November 28** for a "bikes only" night, and **Tuesday, December 5** for dog owners and their pups. (Dog-sized ugly holiday sweaters are very much encouraged.) More info and pricing at winterwonderlandportland.com. Northeast Portland's **The Grotto** is a more spiritual lights experience, with a little less hustle-bustle, and a little more space for contemplation. There's outdoor caroling, a petting zoo, (new this year: a baby camel!) and no less than five choirs performing each night. The lights open for the season right after Thanksgiving and run until December 30, every night from 5 pm-9:30 pm. More info at thegrotto.org. Thinking of buying a house on SE Portland's **Peacock Lane**? We hope you like lights. The neighbors here do it up right, and hundreds of visitors flock there nightly to see



AARON LONGWELL

the displays. Usually opens mid-month with a few pedestrian-only nights, and runs through the end of the month. Gazing at the more than a million and a half bulbs at the Oregon Zoo's **ZooLights** is an annual tradition for many PDX families. **Pro tip:** Avoid the battle for parking, and take the MAX; you'll get a discount on admission, too. ZooLights runs until January 7, visit oregonzoo.com for closed dates, hours and prices. (Members get in free!)

let the music play

We love the **Portland Revels'** annual holiday shows, which are rich with song, dance and joy. This year, they're intertwining Icelandic myths, Finnish fairy tales and the mystical Northern Lights. Check out the special children's shows on **December 29 and 30**, which are 50 minutes long and designed for audiences aged 3 to 7 at the Artists' Rep Theater. More info at portlandrevels.org. Unwind after the holidays with music from the **Portland Youth Philharmonic**, which features guest performances from some of the city's most notable ensembles in a Spanish-themed show at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. **Tuesday, December 26** at 7:30 pm. More info at portland5.com.



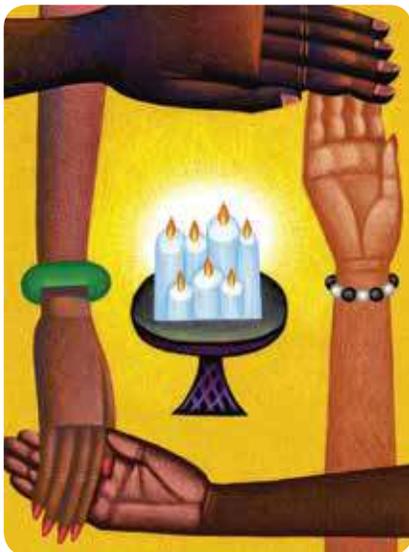
ginger spice

The denizens of *The Great British Baking Show* have nothing on the gingerbread creations that are on view at **OMSI this month through January 1**. Kids get to vote for their favorite of the fantastical structures made of sturdy gingerbread and other sweet treats, and learn about the science behind cookie construction, too. Included in general admission; visit omsi.com for hours and pricing.



new year's, baby

Ring in the New Year at midnight does not mix well with the littlest kiddos. But you've got two great options for New Year's fun that take place *during the day*. (And let's face it, you're probably too tired to stay up till midnight, anyways.) **Penny's Puppets** will be performing at The Old Church in downtown on **Friday, December 29** at 10:30 am (doors at 10 am). She and the puppets are putting on their Boogie Woogie New Year's show and kids in the audience get hats to celebrate. Tickets are \$5, get them at: brownpapertickets.com/event/3164562. At the **Portland Children's Museum** they'll be holding New Year's countdowns all day on **December 31**. Make sure your kids bring dancing shoes — a dance party and arts and crafts are also part of the fun. Included in the price of admission. Members free.



what unites us

Did you know that the word **Kwanzaa** means "first fruits?" The late December weeklong celebration of African-American culture, heritage and values, will be observed at the North Portland branch of the Multnomah County Library on **Saturday, December 30**, 10:30 am-noon. Join in to celebrate unity with a family-friendly storytime, candle ceremony and Kwanzaa-themed craft. Light snacks provided, too! Free.



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pdxparent.com/pdx-holiday-fun

Santa Sightings:
pdxparent.com/portland-santa-sightings-2017

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Last Look



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Our panel of kid judges will select the winners, whose pictures will be featured in an upcoming issue of our magazine. We can't wait to see what (or who!) you create!

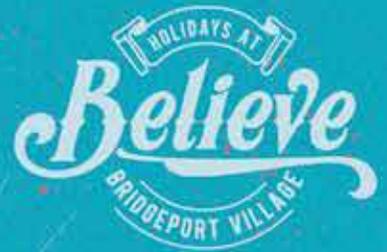
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