# North Shore OX Families

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#### A Letter from the Publisher & Editor

## Summer is Just Around the Corner

#### by Suzanne Provencher, Publisher/Editor

It's hard to believe, but summer will soon be here! Have you made plans for your kids' summer yet? Check out pages 9-11 in this issue for more great summer options for your children! We urge you to register for camp today and before the final slots are filled for this summer. Visit our online Camp Directory at

www.northshorefamilies.com/camp-directory-2017/ – click on a camp – and get connected to our camps' websites to learn more and to register.

For those camps that may still have a few slots to fill, our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Camps & Programs Showcase Series concludes in our Summer issue, which covers



June AND July. This will be your last chance to share your summer

offerings with our readers throughout the North Shore this year. To participate, please contact me by noon, Wed., May 10, to secure your space and your summer!

Our next issue is our Summer issue and it covers two months, June AND July; we do not have a separate July issue. So if you have anything to share with our 50K+ parent readers in June and/or July, please secure your ad space in our 2-month Summer issue by May 10. And then we'll resume our regular monthly

publishing schedule with our August issue, just in time for the *Back to School* season.

Check out our Summer Advertising Special on page 8 and \$ave!

Beginning this month, we welcome Mark Tuttle, Esq., who shares the basics of Family Law. In this issue, we learn about the importance of Health Care Proxies. In coming months, we'll explore Wills, Living Wills, Trusts, Estate Planning, Powers of Attorney, Elder Care and more. Mark has over 20 years of financial and legal experience. See his ad on page 7 and his article on page 6.

In closing, I'd like to wish all North Shore area mothers, grandmothers, caregivers and others a very **Happy Mother's Day!** May you find yourself surrounded by family, friends and love on this special day.

Until next time ~ Suzanne





## 6 Signs That You Want Your Child to be Your Friend

#### by Dr. Kate Roberts

There is no easy explanation for why parents have a difficult time setting limits with kids today. Parents seem to find negative attitude, back talk and disregard for authority acceptable, whereas one or two generations ago, most parents refused to tolerate this behavior which is now considered the norm for many children and teens.

What's changed? Parents today struggle with wanting to be more of a friend to their children, than a parent. This is dangerous for many reasons. The most obvious reason is that children don't need adult friends, they need parents and they need same age peer friends. Adults that want to be their child's friend more often than not are fulfilling their own needs. A healthy parent-child relationship is not about the parent's needs and all about the child's emotional needs. When a child has the responsibility for taking care of a parent, by accepting a parent as their friend, children become "parentified", meaning, that they take on the role of the one "in charge", not a comfortable place for children who are developing and far from adulthood.

Here are some signs that you may be too much in the "friend" role with your

1. Using a child as a confidant. When parents confide in their child, this is often a sign that there is not a good sense of adult-child boundaries in the relationship. Children are not able to comprehend adult problems and adults need to respect this and find age-appropriate confidants. Using your child as a confidant includes behaviors such as expressing your personal beliefs about their teacher, the neighbor or their friend's parents. Kids aren't able to process adult content, and parents sometimes forget this and treat them as if they are adults.

- 2. Making up for a bad childhood. Many adults wish they could change aspects of their own childhood. This is normal and natural and yet, it's not possible. Many adults have unresolved aspects of their upbringing and they unconsciously use their own children to try to resolve their conflicts left over from childhood. While it's fine to not want to make mistakes that your parents made, it's not ok to overcompensate and be too available if your parents were too distant. Wanting to be too available for a child can lead to parents wanting their child's approval. Parents who need to feel accepted by their child in order to feel okay are placing an emotional burden on their child. If you are struggling with your own parents' distance from your childhood, as a parent, you may become overinvolved in your child's life. Resolve your conflicts from your childhood independently from being a parent.
- 3. Don't bail your child out. If your child chose not to do their

Continued on page 4

#### North Shore Children & Families



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Please see page 3 for our upcoming deadlines.

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**Issue** 

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**September** 

Noon, Wed., 8/23

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Our next issue is our 2-month Summer issue, which covers June AND July!

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**Our final camp showcase** appears in our Summer issue. **Secure your space** and your summer today!

See page 8 for our Summer Advertising Special!



#### 6 Signs

Continued from page 3



homework or accept some other responsibility, don't make excuses for them to help them to avoid natural consequences. They will come to rely on you in a way that's unhealthy. They need to be accountable for their actions – good and bad – and they will learn to accept responsibility and therefore learn to act responsibly. When parents enable a child, and take over the child's responsibilities, they disempower them and make them codependent in a way that's unhealthy.

- 4. Don't allow too much freedom with technology. Today many parents are afraid to insist on passwords and access to their children's social media accounts. Parents report that their child will "never speak to me again" if I over manage their technology use and accounts. Close monitoring of technology use is an essential component of being an effective parent today. This is a non-negotiable for parents in order to ensure that their child is safe. Children who insist that they don't want their parents to have access should not be using social media for activities that they are too afraid to show their parents.
- 5. Accept that your child will get angry with you. Parents need to be okay with the reality that, at times, their child will get angry about parent decisions that they don't like. I hear many parents say, "I just can't stand to have him mad at me". Although it's uncomfortable, parents need to learn that it's a natural part of development for children to disagree and become angry with parents at times.
- **6. Stop the guilt.** Parents overcompensate when they feel guilty. They give their children too much freedom, privileges or material items as a way of making up for other perceived shortcomings in their parenting. No one is perfect. If you do the best you can, evaluate whether your parenting is effective and make necessary improvements, you are doing all you can.

Dr. Kate Roberts is a licensed child and school psychologist and family therapist with offices in Salem and Hamilton. She welcomes newcomers to her private practice. She specializes in cognitive-behavior therapy, family therapy, ADHD, anxiety and learning disabilities. She can be reached at kate@drkateroberts.com and www.drkateroberts.com.

## Shore Country Day School

#### Shore announces an expanded Pre-K program with new options beginning in September

## At Shore, an Earlier Start Inspired by Italy

hen teacher Tracy Keith illuminates the light table in the center of Shore Country Day School's new learning space for very young pre-kindergarten students, children instinctively move toward the enticing warm glow. Discovering the properties of mix-and-match colors and materials on the lighted surface, these barely-four-year-old investigators resemble their older elementary and middle school peers—perhaps gathered around one of the school's Harkness discussion tables, or arrayed alongside a workbench in the school's Innovation Lab.

That similarity, Keith says, is quite deliberate. "The vision for our Pre-K I program," she explains, "is to bring kids into the Shore community as early as possible, getting them comfortable right away with Shore's model of children exploring and learning together—a concept that runs from the first day of Pre-K to the last day of Grade 9"

The Beverly school's expanded Pre-K program encompasses two years: Pre-K I for children who are under four; and Pre-K 2 for children who are ready for Shore's existing Pre-K offering. Families may choose either a full- or half-day schedule for Pre-K I, with both options priced to compete with traditional preschools and nursery schools. Whether they choose a full or half day, families will find in Pre-K I the same blend of academic focus, creative opportunity, and personal engagement and growth for which Shore is renowned. And, their child will be guaranteed a spot in the indemand Pre-K 2 program and beyond.



Teacher Tracy Keith with Pre-K students in the new classroom space

Sara Knox, Head of Lower School, explains that Shore's newest program is based on a child-centered philosophy of early education first developed in the village of Reggio



Elia and Alessandra Tessicini

Emilia, Italy. "The Reggio Emilia approach recognizes the instinctive curiosity and wonder a child brings into the classroom," she says, "and has the teacher take a step back to allow the child to manage the learning process. In a Reggio Emilia-style classroom, children work handson with a variety of materials, come up with their own questions, and invent the plan for getting answers to those questions." Year-round, the experience extends

out-of-doors, into a dedicated new outdoor classroom that's full of possibilities.

But, Knox explains, "In large measure, the value of our program for four-year-olds is not just in the stellar curriculum or the custom-designed spaces; it's in the expansive group of caring adults and older children looking out for their well-being, and building relationships that may last for years. For our Pre-K I students, the advantage in having two full years getting to know the campus, the community, and the culture is tremendous—they enter Kindergarten with such confidence; they're often the ones who are quicker to read and grasp bigger concepts. The experience lays the groundwork for their entire Shore career."

one South Hamilton family, the Tessicinis, who were among the first to enroll in Shore's earliest offering three years ago. Elia Tessicini, reflecting on her daughter Alessandra's experience, attests, "The biggest thing we

saw over Alessandra's two years in Pre-K was how much she began to love school, to be able to fearlessly explore any subject that she was interested in. Shore does such a good job at fostering that natural curiosity."

The Tessicinis discovered Shore when Alessandra was not yet four. "We had considered all the independent schools in the area, and felt strongly that Shore was the right fit in the long run. But at the time, Alessandra was just too young for the existing Pre-K program, and we were going to have to change schools twice—once for her first year of Pre-K, and then a second time moving to Shore." However, switching schools was something the family desperately wanted to avoid: Elia's late husband, Mark, at that time was very sick with ALS, and they were doing everything they could to protect Alessandra from additional upheaval.

Fortunately, when Shore's Admissions office and Pre-K teaching team heard the family's story, they were in the ideal position to help. Tracy Keith and her longtime colleague, veteran Pre-K teacher Beth White, had for years envisioned a Pre-K program that could serve younger children.

"The Tessicinis' unique situation was a real catalyst," recounts White. "Over the past few years we've invested a great deal in developing ways to individualize our instruction with younger learners, and when we met Alessandra we knew we were ready. We saw a chance not only to support this particular family, but also to roll out a rich and academically structured program to other families with young children who were ready for us."

Being "the right child at the right time," as Elia Tessicini puts it, couldn't have worked out better for Alessandra. "Socially and emotionally, Shore gave us a great support system, getting her settled and confident while we as a family went through a very difficult time." But, she explains, the benefits would be the same for anyone. "If you're a working parent like I am," she says, "you're going to pay for care at that age one way or another. And if you're committed to the quality and value of education that Shore offers, and you do the math, then it's a no brainer: what better place to prepare for Shore than Shore!"

The information contained in this education feature was submitted by Shore Country Day School, and published in partnership with North Shore Children & Families; www.northshorefamilies.com.

#### Ask Dr. Kate

### **Q&A** for North Shore Parents

### **Happy Mother's Day**

by Dr. Kate Roberts

Question: Is it okay for me to spend Mother's Day with my girlfriends? I always thought it was a family day, but a few of my friends are going to a spa and I want to go but I feel guilty.

Answer: Mother's Day is what you make it. Moms who worry about what others want on Mother's Day defeat that point of the celebration. Moms should be able to choose how to spend their day. Your friends may decide they want to splurge at the spa, but you may choose to be with your family anyway. I think the most important part of deciding how to spend the day is understanding what

you want. Some moms are so conditioned to doing what will please others that they've forgotten their own needs and wants. Whether you want a girlfriends' day or a family day, either is okay as long as your choice is for you. Moms don't have permission to put their needs first any other day of the year, and so when it's Mother's Day, know how you'd most enjoy it and go for it. The hardest part of this is blocking out all the noise. You may hear 5 different opinions on what Mother's Day should be and yet it's only your opinion that counts on Mother's Day. That's not being selfish or narcissistic. It's just being smart and taking the day for how it's intended - a day to celebrate your

role as mother in whatever way you want. Go for it and enjoy it. It only happens once a year.

Realize that whatever you choose to do, your children will accept it and want you to be happy as long as you show them that you're good with your choice. When you act conflicted, they may think they did something wrong and your choice really has nothing to do with them. Your children will love you regardless.

Happy Mother's Day, however you choose to spend it!

Dr. Kate Roberts is a psychologist and parent coach on the North Shore. Questions can be directed to www.drkateroberts.com, www.twitter.com/DrKateParenting, www.facebook.com/Dr.KateRobertsParenting or www.pinterest.com/DrKateParenting. We may anonymously publish your question and Dr. Kate's answer in a future issue.

#### Family Law

## The Importance of Having a Health Care Proxy

by Mark Tuttle, Esq.

My brother-in-law was recently rushed to the hospital with stroke symptoms. His co-workers dismissed his symptoms, rationalizing that he was a little "off" and that only old people have strokes. His brother, also a co-worker, realized that something was wrong and called an ambulance. Now this story is not a scare tactic about people unexpectedly dying in their 40's and 50's without a will – although they do. This is a story about the importance of having a health care proxy.

My brother-in-law was rushed to the hospital by ambulance where he was diagnosed with a stroke. The normal stroke treatment would take place, but a new drug that, if administered, could lessen the damage to his body. However, the hospital needed informed consent in order to administer the drug due to some rather disconcerting side effects. In his current condition, my brother-in-law could not provide informed consent. Lucky for him, his eldest brother was his health care proxy and the hospital accepted the health care proxy's decision to administer the drug as if it were my brother-in-law's decision.

A health care proxy is a document that appoints another individual to serve as your health care decision maker should you lack the capacity to communicate or make health care decisions. Typically, the person nominated as the health care proxy is someone you know and trust, and someone with whom you have discussed and who understands your medical wishes. It can be helpful to select an alternate health care proxy should your primary health care proxy be unavailable during a medical emergency. A health care proxy is not to be confused with a living will, which will be discussed in an upcoming issue. However, when an attorney discusses drafting a will, a health care proxy and a living will are generally included. All three documents are needed and all three documents are the basic building blocks of an estate plan.

You will be glad to know that, due to the hospital's administration of the drug on my brother-in-law's health care proxy's consent, the drug essentially prevented or reversed any of the negative physical and mental effects of having a stroke. My brother-in-law has attended family functions and acts as if the stroke had never happened.

Mark Tuttle is a practicing attorney with offices in Salem, MA – Tuttle Trust & Fiduciary Services, LLC. Mark is a member of the Massachusetts Bar and the Federal Court Bar. You can contact Mark to set up a free estate planning or elder law consultation at mark@tuttletfs.com.

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#### Raising Compassionate Children



## Teaching Kids to Give Brings Happiness, Healing and Purpose

#### by Leah Okimoto

Happy Spring (finally)! This month we are thrilled to highlight several awesome, passionate, creative kids from the North Shore who are currently working on their plans to spread the love to others in their own unique ways.



#### **Kindness Rocks**

Ryan is a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student at the Higgins Middle School in Peabody and working with *Aaron's Presents* to complete this project. Ryan is painting river rocks various colors and then writing inspirational messages and words on them. He plans to scatter these inspirational rocks around the North Shore in the hopes that as people come across them, they will make them happy. And if they are going through a bad time, maybe give them hope. Ryan came up

with this idea after his aunt told him a story about a woman who was fighting cancer, found a rock that said "hope", and changed her outlook, helping her fight her illness all the way to recovery. Knowing that finding the message of "hope" on a rock that day on the beach is what renewed her strength. Ryan likes to think that maybe it can happen to others and he can be the creator of their hopeful rocks.

#### Нарру Music for Elders

3<sup>rd</sup> grader Dylan attends the Brown Elementary School in Peabody, and loves being an actress and playing her clarinet. She dreams of becoming a famous actress one day! She wanted to use her talents to make a difference, and this

led to her coming up with this project idea and applying to participate in *Aaron's Presents*. Dylan is putting together a couple of musical pieces and will visit two elderly communities on the North Shore this spring, where she will deliver cookies, play music for them and spend time talking with the residents. We know she'll bring such positive energy!

#### **True Voice**

Claudia, Diana and Eladie are three passionate 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Centerville Elementary School in Beverly, working on a project in support of their school's Anti-Bullying Program. *True Voice* is a project that encourages kids to be



kind to one another and at the same time, gives them information about the negative effects of bullying and strategies for kids to use if they feel they are being bullied. The project will consist of the girls speaking at the school's community meeting and in individual classrooms, and a poster campaign with inspirational messages that will be displayed throughout the school. There's nothing more powerful in creating positive school culture than students taking matters into their own hands, caring for each other and trying to keep each other safe and happy.

**SAVETHE DATE!** Please Save the Date for our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Ice Cream Celebration at Phillips Academy in Andover on Saturday, June 17, 1:30-3:30pm! All are welcome to this free event, and we encourage you to come and enjoy meeting and being inspired by some of our 300+ participants from this year and hearing them talk about their experiences of giving of themselves for others. Love this card designed by our 5<sup>th</sup> graders, Rayna, Simran and Erin!

Please visit www.aaronspresents.org to learn more about how a child you know can apply to participate or to get involved in some way. We would also like to hear from people on the North Shore/North of Boston region who are interested in serving on our board (an amazing, collaborative group of community members!) and helping us plan strategically for the future. Thank you for your generosity and for helping us reach more kids!

Leah Okimoto is the Executive Director of Aaron's Presents, a 501(c)(3) youth development organization providing a unique, child-initiated, child-led and non-competitive program that inspires and empowers children in 8th grade and below to give of themselves for the benefit of others in their own way. She founded Aaron's Presents in memory of her infant son, Aaron, and is based in the Merrimack Valley area of the North Shore. Kimberly LaBonte-Kay is the North Shore Regional Director. Feel free to contact either Leah at lokimoto@aaronspresents.org or (978) 809-5487 or Kim at kimberly@aaronspresents.org with any questions or to schedule a presentation for your school, youth program or group.



#### Children's Book Review

## A Bike Like Sergio's

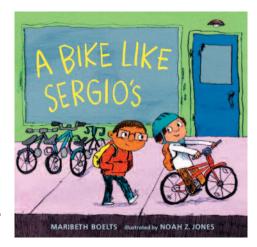
## Written by Maribeth Boelts; illustrations by Noah Z. Jones

#### by Michelle Mullet

"I am a thing-finder. And when you're a thing-finder, you don't have a minute to spare!" ~ Pippi Longstocking

I'll be the first to admit, I love finding things that others have lost. Maybe it's a residual, fond memory of reading *Pippi Longstocking*. I've always been a "thing-finder" and I encourage my two boys to be just as curious. I even love finding things that are broken or useless, like a solitary mitten or a broken watch.

I longed to be some type of *Indiana Jones* character as a kid. But now, I have to teach my kids that just because you find something doesn't mean it's automatically yours to keep. Sometimes this can be ambiguous



territory for kids. The "Finders Keepers, Losers Weepers" philosophy of the 70s doesn't really work anymore.

So, I'm glad I found this new book, A Bike Like Sergio's, by Maribeth Boelts, with illustrations by Noah Z. Jones. It's a great way to help kids learn the

unspoken rules of lost and found items.

In this short picture book, there's a kid named Ruben and his best friend, Sergio, who gets a new bike. Both boys look to be about 9 or 10 years old. Ruben has hard-working parents that love him, but they just can't afford a new bike these days. Dejected and depressed, Ruben happens to find some money at the corner grocery store. Now his dreams of getting a new bike could really come true, but he feels strange about keeping this money because he saw the lady who dropped it.

He's conflicted inside about doing the right thing and doing something that would make him very happy. For a moment, he thinks he has lost this coveted hundred dollar bill and he begins to empathize with the woman who lost her paper money earlier that week. Once he understands the sense of loss, it sticks with him. As luck would have it, Ruben runs into the same lady at the grocery store a few days later and he gives "the lady with the blue coat" her hundred dollar bill. The woman feels grateful and the little boy feels proud after

doing the right thing.

Setting a child's moral compass can be complicated and intimidating work. This book allows for some real problems with real emotions to manifest and then resolve themselves in a way that's helpful and satisfying to the reader. One twist is that at first glance, Ruben thinks he's simply found a one dollar bill. Once he has realized he's found \$100 dollars, the excitement quickly turns to dread as he understands the gravity of the situation. This was someone's groceries for the week. This money was important to someone. And so, even though he longs for that brand new bike like Sergio's, he decides to give back the thing that wasn't his in the first place.

The author says it best when she tells potential readers, "Doing what's right often involves some wrestling, and Ruben wrestles! It may also require a sacrifice and it's in the middle of this tough place that we grow."

I found this book at my local library. Ask your local librarian to order it if it's not already on the New Books' shelf!

Michelle Mullet is a North Shore mom of 2 young boys whose work has been published in Haiku Journal, The Puffin Review and the New England Seacoast Writers' Association Journal. She has a degree in journalism and is working on her first children's chapter book. You can follow Michelle for book reviews, essays and blog updates @bunnycones.

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## **Does Your Camp or Summer Program Still Have Slots to Fill?**

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## Summer Camps & Programs Showcase Series 10th Annual - Part 4 of 5



Series concludes in our Summer issue.



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North Shore Children & Families

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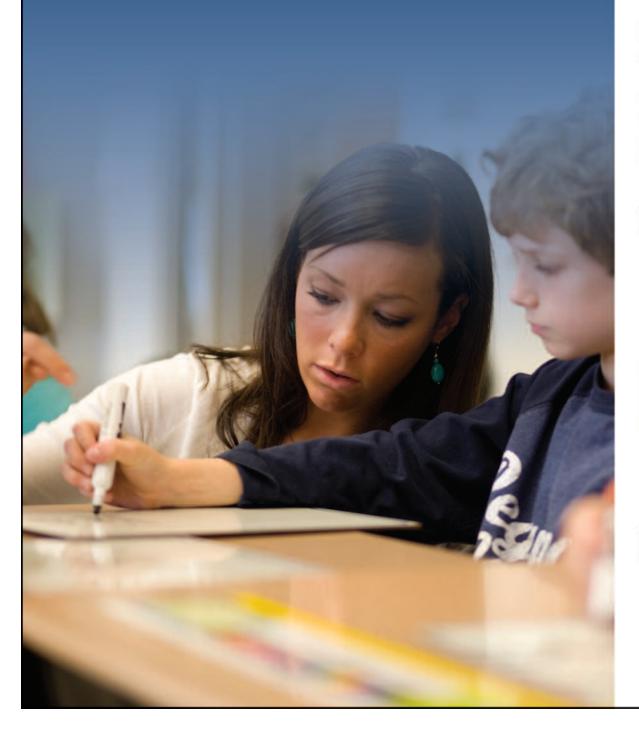
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