

North Shore Children & Families

FREE!

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of Your Summer!**

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Independent School
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Noon, Wed., Aug. 23**



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AUGUST 2017

From the Publisher & Editor

Endings & Beginnings The Fall 2017 Independent School Showcase Series!

by **Suzanne Provencher,**
Publisher/Editor

Hello again, dear readers! I hope you are all enjoying your summer. We are coming into the final stretch of summer, so now is the time to do all of those things you've been meaning

to do! Are the summer reading lists done? Did you learn to paddleboard, as you planned? Did you take that hike with your kids? Are there any medical appointments to take care of? It's not too late! In a few short weeks, you'll hopefully ease back in to

the back to school routines and demands – making sure the kids have their school supplies, sneakers, sports equipment, uniforms and a million other things needed for a successful back to school experience.

But for today – I truly hope you enjoy your summer with your family and friends. And when summer has ended, you'll be ready to begin the new school year.

School Showcase Series, which continues in our October and November issues. This 3-part Series includes an editorial bonus for participating schools, as well as the opportunity to appear in our online Independent School Showcase, which links to your school! **Contact suzanne@northshorefamilies.com for advertising information and to secure your space in this popular feature with high parent interest.**

Tell our 50K+ parent readers throughout the North Shore why they should consider your school for their children! **The deadline to advertise is noon, Wednesday, August 23.** I hope you will join us!

**Until Next Time ~
Suzanne**



ATTENTION SCHOOLS & PARENTS: Coming up in our September issue, we'll bring you **The Fall 2017 Independent**

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Give Yourself Some Downtime this Summer

by Dr. Kate Roberts, PhD

Downtime, you say? What's that? With today's information overload and 24/7 access to technology and immediate connection to others, we don't allow ourselves a much needed break. If you haven't had idle time this summer, now might be the time to grab it. The lazy days of summer seem scarcer as we get busier and more overscheduled beginning with the start of the new school year. Recharge now when you can! It will pay off once the schedule is less in your hands. There is more research than ever to show that just doing nothing is actually beneficial. It allows us to recharge and allows us to clear our heads before we venture into the next big task or project. It's that mental break that we should be able to give ourselves in the summer and hopefully more often during other times of every week as well.

In today's fast paced, on call always culture, we expect too much of ourselves. And doing nothing or very little is seen as unproductive and therefore irresponsible. Yet if done correctly, being idle may be just what you need in order to achieve that next big goal.

Here are some noteworthy benefits of taking some downtime and some suggestions for how to get that much needed downtime before the end of summer:



I. Creativity. Some of the most creative processes happen when we are not engaged in other tasks. These are times our brains have to just wander and ideas are formed in the subconscious and emerge to the conscious in

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North Shore Children & Families



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for our upcoming deadlines.

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PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Issue	Ad Space Deadline
September	Noon, Wed., 8/23
October	Noon, Wed., 9/20
November	Noon, Wed., 10/18

To explore your advertising options or to secure your space,
please contact Suzanne at 781.584.4569 or
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ATTENTION SCHOOLS!

Join us in
The
Fall 2017
Independent
School Showcase
Series!

See page 5

RSVP by Aug. 23!

Give Yourself Some Downtime this Summer

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time. Most experts agree that if you want to be creative, turn off devices and creativity occurs away from the distractions of technology.

2. Stop being on the go. We can feel a rush from being hyper busy and engaged in 24/7 stimulation, but often this level of activity stops our most creative processes because we don't have time and space for those. Look around at restaurants or when in public transit and people are usually responding to something on their phones. This could be downtime, but most people aren't taking it as such. Sometimes you have to justify taking a break and once you believe in the merit of a break, it's a lot easier not to allow others frenzies to influence you. In fact, being idle and taking a break induces more imagination and better mental health, experts say.

3. Downtime allows us time to reflect. We need time to consider what's working and what is not. Without stopping and having those kinds of conversations with ourselves, we aren't getting the full benefit of our hard work and efforts. It is a well known thought amongst creativity experts that for creative genius to occur, periods of no work can sometimes be a significant contributor to creating the best inventions. Reduction in homework in school is based on the beliefs that homework is busy work that deprives the brain from much need downtime. And that with rest and less review work, students will actually perform better in school.

4. Avoiding information overload. We could spend entire days just looking at the web or social media and have nothing to show for it but a load of information that we can't possibly process and subsequent confusion and frustration. If this sounds like you or your children, stop that cycle now. It's a bad habit, like watching TV while pigging out on food. After it's all over, boy, do you feel badly.



5. Be mindful. Mindfulness is a state of active, open attention on the present. Instead of letting your life pass you by, mindfulness means living in the moment and awakening to experience. Mindfulness is being committed to each moment and rather than seeing time as slipping away unconsciously, it's being intentionally present to experience everything life has to offer in every moment and allowing you to focus solely on the present experience.

6. Make the mind-body connection. Physical relaxation occurs when you engage in some routine physical activity that will allow your brain to wander, allow your brain more blood flow and keep you aware of how your mind and body are connected.

Here's wishing you some downtime this summer!

Dr. Kate Roberts is a licensed child and school psychologist and family therapist with offices in Salem and Wenham. She helps people to feel empowered in their lives. Contact Dr. Kate at kate@drkateroberts.com and www.drkateroberts.com.

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Raising Compassionate Children



Teaching Kids to Give Brings Happiness, Healing and Purpose

by Leah Okimoto

Happy Summer! Thank you to all of you who supported and/or attended our 4th Annual Aaron's Presents Celebration at Phillips Academy in June! We spent a beautiful, fun afternoon with over 250 attendees celebrating the 328 kids, ages 7-14, who positively impacted the lives of others by tapping into their kindness, creativity and unique qualities this past year. They completed 337 projects that benefited an estimated 4,400 individuals throughout the North Shore! We also love giving kids public speaking opportunities, and 18 young participants voluntarily wrote and gave heartfelt speeches about what their projects meant to them and to others.

Since the *Celebration*, we have been keeping busy finishing up some of the projects that couldn't be coordinated during the school year and have also been spending time with our high school-aged Alumni, volunteering and supporting them in developing themselves, their talents and their future goals.

8th graders Lilian, Arihesly, Rosse and Aneris wanted to fit in one more project before officially becoming 9th graders, so they came up with an idea to throw a *Spa Day* for girls living at a group home in Dracut for foster children

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Schools:

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Contact Suzanne@northshorefamilies.com
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Children's Book Review

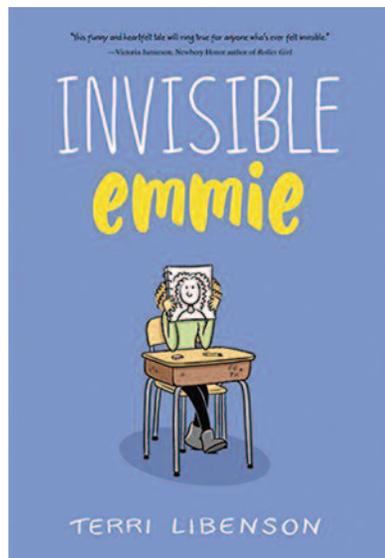
Invisible Emmie

Written by Terri Libenson

by Michelle Mullet

Middle School conjures up a maelstrom of emotions for most of us. For kids wading through the thick of it, there's this cute graphic novel by Terri Libenson called *Invisible Emmie*. In the spirit of books like *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, Libenson delves into the dark, boring hallways of life as a half-kid, half-adolescent.

The comic book style drawing has two versions of the same school. One is the cute, bright, plucky life of the most popular and luckiest girl at school, a 7th grader named Katie. Everyone adores her and her scenes in the book are big, confident and dynamic. Her backgrounds are drawn with thick, bold words and actions. The colors are bright, new and inviting. Meanwhile, *Invisible Emmie* gets thin, light pen drawings with minimal effects and quiet, mousy movements. The background colors of her life are drab,



boring and mostly kind of "meh". It's fun to jump in between the two worlds of these girls because you learn to like them for their differences and you don't necessarily feel the need to be one way or the other.

I think most kids would enjoy this book if they are just entering middle school or having trouble fitting in these days.

There's a really wonderful twist to their friendship that I won't spoil here, but it's refreshing and unexpected. Where the *Wimpy Kid* series constantly bombards with wacky high jinks and awkward anecdotes, this book runs on a lower gear with subtlety and slow crescendos that leave the reader satisfied and wishing for just one more chapter.

An honest, heartfelt way of looking at adolescent life from the inside out, *Invisible Emmie* never belittles the larger than life, high stakes drama in every embarrassing, every day event. One angle I really enjoy as an adult looking back at both girls, I can see being on both sides of a situation. In one classroom scene, a boy throws a dumb note onto Emmie's desk. She's blushing with embarrassment while Katie thinks to herself, "Poor girl...honestly, I don't understand people who

don't stick up for themselves. It's not like it takes effort."

Sure, it sounds simple enough. Just stand up to a bully. Short and sweet advice for kids of every age. But building up that self-confidence from nothing is a monumental task. It takes time and it takes confiding in others. Taking those first steps to being your own, confident and true self can leave you on shaky ground. That's where this book gives readers a chance to empathize and see that this daunting path in between little kid and young adult isn't as scary as it seems.

Kids who like funny comics and graphic novels will get a kick out of this book. It's a great end of the summer, light read before we all head back to school. And that's when being invisible sounds like a really awesome superpower, right?

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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Aaron's Presents

Continued from page 5

ages 5-12. We went shopping the day before for hair, makeup, facial and nail supplies, and then they spent 2 hours hanging out with seven younger girls, having a blast, dancing and sharing their spa expertise (which is actually quite impressive!). More important than the activities themselves were the generosity, human connection, care and empowerment – our four core values – that were on full display that day. These girls had the power to connect with the younger girls immediately, and to use their kindness to inspire and light a spark that was felt by everyone in the room that afternoon. As with all of our projects, both givers and receivers benefited richly from this simple but memorable experience.



5th grader Harini is a vegetarian and left her lunch at home one day last year. She was disappointed to find that there were very few options at her school for vegetarians. She approached us with an idea to provide healthy snacks, salads, etc. for school cafeterias. We loved the idea, but it was a little beyond the scope of what we were able to practically accomplish, and many schools do not allow outside food any longer. So, we approached an after-school program in Lawrence called *Si, Se Puede* instead, and asked them if they would like some healthy and vegetarian snacks for their kids to try. They said 'yes', and Harini came up with a creative idea for a food scavenger hunt

activity, allowing the kids to try some new snacks they might not have heard of yet. So one day, after selecting and purchasing the various snacks, including roasted seaweed, dried fruits, a popped corn snack and others, she made a fun rating form for them to fill out as they tasted each item and we went to meet the kids. They were very brave and tasted everything, even liking some of these foods, and everyone had a lot of fun in the process. We were also able to leave some of each food behind, so they could keep enjoying them. Again, our four core ingredients made this project very special. Great job, Harini!

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, including the Merrimack Valley area, 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.

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Dig, climb, and build in *Construction Zone*. Ride a real Bobcat, operate the jackhammer, and deploy a team of trucks on your own construction site.

Notice, wonder, question, and play in *Science Playground*.

August Special Events

FISHING 101

Monday-Thursday, 10am-1pm & 2pm-4pm; Fridays, 10am-1pm & 3pm-5pm (Now-August 25), outside the Museum.

Join our friends from Save the Harbor, Save the Bay for fishing from our boardwalk. Please note: there will be no Fishing 101 on August 4 or August 7.

#POPSCOPE

August 4, 6-8pm

Look up! What do you see? Birds? Airplanes? Stars? Join the folks from #popscope and use a telescope to look for stars, planets, and other features in the night sky. *Program time depends on the sunset.*

MAKER WEEKEND: MAKE IT WORK!

Project FUNway

August 11, 5-9pm & August 12, 11am-3pm

Upcycle ordinary materials into fancy, fun, fearless wearable art. Work in teams to solve design challenges and discover new ways to wear old stuff! Then strut your stuff on the FUNway with other young makers.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, BOSTON CHILDREN'S MUSEUM!

Tuesday, August 1, 10am-5pm

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