

# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

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## THE VALUE of

VOLUNTEERING

REBECCA  
SCHWARTZ

PREDATORS

DO NOT TAKE  
SUMMER  
*Vacation*

MICHAEL  
BRESLIN

BECOMING A  
SURVIVOR

MARGARET  
HOELZER

PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS MAGAZINE

EDITION #4

# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

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# *Welcome to Parents with Preparedness Magazine*



**A**s Summer 2021 unfolds, I find myself reflecting about the endless possibilities which lie ahead as the world slowly recovers, schools are scheduled to reopen, work rules are rewritten, and families reconnect. We have learned more than we ever wanted to about grief and loss, we have been compelled to learn new models of learning and we have almost refined the art of collaboration at a distance. Through it all, I think we discovered a new sense of resiliency and the indomitability of the human spirit. I reflect as well on the reason I undertook this effort and encouraged others to join, and it is because there are only a few times in ordinary lives when inspiration and imagination come together and last; we created PWPORG to be exactly that place. It provides the opportunity to use a lifetime of service and earned

experience to help others invest in their own security and preparedness. The Parents With Preparedness magazine provides a safe forum to share knowledge that can help others and resources that are both practical and available.

How else could we find a similarity between a world class Olympian, career law enforcement and firefighters, a veterinarian, a rocket scientist, cyber experts, scriptwriters, authors, and entrepreneurs? The answer is really simple, and it is hidden in plain sight. It is not because they are all parents, although most are. It is because each understands the inestimable value of community engagement, and that preparedness always matters. Have a great summer!

**Dr. Kathleen Kiernan**

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# BECOMING A SURVIVOR

By Margaret Hoelzer

**M**y name is Margaret Hoelzer. I am a two-time Olympic swimmer and a three-time Olympic medalist. But, more importantly, I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. Those are two sentences you don't hear together very often, or at least you don't think of belonging together, but they do. My story of survival is the same story that got me to the Olympics. It's a story of strength, of overcoming, and ultimately learning to believe in myself.

I am from Huntsville, Alabama. I was abused from the ages of 5-7 years old by the father of a friend of mine. My abuse was fairly typical. My abuser was someone I knew and trusted, someone my family knew and trusted. This man gained access to me via his own child. Like so many victims, I didn't tell anyone because this man asked me not to. He was someone I trusted, and he was asking me to keep a secret; that was a good thing, right? I felt special. An adult was trusting me, so I did what he said. I didn't tell anyone until years later, when I was eleven. In 1994, we had sexual abuse education

in our school system in Alabama. Little did I know how rare or how important sexual abuse education was and what a role it would play in my life. After watching a series of videos and having some class discussions, I decided to tell my best friend at the time what had happened to me. I wasn't sure if it was abuse, if it was what I had seen in the videos, but I felt compelled to tell her. My eleven-year-old friend knew exactly what to do. She looked right at me and said, "Margaret, I think you were molested." 'Molested,' now that is not a word you hear in your average 11-year-old's vocabulary. My friend then did the only thing she could have, which was the exact right thing to do. She said, "You need to tell your parents." My mom's first clue that something was up should have been that it was a gorgeous day outside, she was about to put this border up around her bedroom wall, and I volunteered to help. Helping with chores when I could be playing outside? Yeah, something was definitely up. For the next hour or so, I told my mom everything that had happened to me, and she listened. Just that, she listened. She

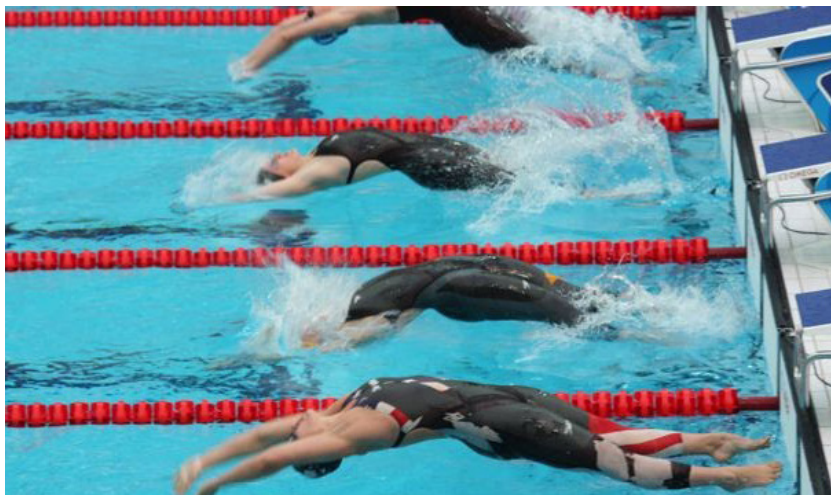
didn't panic, yell, scream, cry or freak out. She listened and told me she believed me when I was done. We went and got ice cream afterward because she wanted me to know that I hadn't done anything wrong and that it would all be ok. My mom called the police after that. What else was she supposed to do? She had no idea, and she wasn't prepared for this, but she knew she had to do something. She had to be there for me and show me that she believed me. The police ultimately sent us to the National Children's Advocacy Center in my hometown, the first advocacy center in the entire country, an organization meant to help abused kids like me. The hardest part was walking in the front door. After that, it was all downhill. I got counseling, and my mom got counseling. We ultimately prosecuted my abuser (although the case was thrown out of court for lack of evidence which is all too common), and I started the healing journey.

I was tall for my age, and at 11 years old, I was also just beginning to get good at swimming. All the emotions, the fear,



anxiety, sadness, anger, confusion, all of it, I poured into the pool. I didn't start swimming because of my abuse, but I was lucky I had a natural outlet for all of the emotions I had no idea what to do with. I continued to rise through the ranks of the swimming world. I ultimately went to Auburn University on a swimming scholarship. Auburn was right down the road, a four-hour drive from Huntsville, but it had one of the best swimming programs in the country, and I found a place where I belonged.

In 2004 at 21 years of age, I made my first Olympic team. In 2008 at 25 years old, I made my second Olympic team and medaled three times, two silvers and a bronze. It was a dream come true, but there was more I wanted to accomplish. At 11-years old, I had decided I wanted to help other kids like me, that I wanted to be involved in the sexual abuse prevention world somehow. I just had to figure out what that would look like. In 2008 several things came together. I had been thinking about telling my story publicly for a while but had this image of a white picket fence and 2.5 kids while doing it, in essence, the perfect life. I finally realized in 2008 that it was always going to be hard and that I didn't need the perfect life to tell my story.



My story was worth telling all on its own, for no other reason than because it was mine.

In 2008 a month after the Olympic games, I went public to the world that I had been sexually abused. The outpouring of love and support was unlike anything I had dreamed possible. I became the spokesperson for the National Children's Advocacy Center. I continue that today as a speaker on the topic of sexual abuse awareness and prevention. My journey isn't over; it is still ongoing. I am still striving every day, working to be a survi-

vor. It's a continuing process, and some days are easier than others. Just like my journey to the Olympics, being a survivor is powerful, but you have to work at it; that's where the power comes from. The first step is making that decision, deciding that you choose yourself and that you want to heal, and you want to reclaim your life. There will always be triggers, memories, and setbacks. That is life, but it's the journey forward that makes us strong. I sincerely believe every victim out there can become a survivor; in fact, I know they can, I believe in you. 🍷

## ABOUT MARGARET HOELZER



**M**argaret Hoelzer is a Double Olympian and three-time Olympic Medalist in Swimming, and a former World Record holder. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, she was awarded Silver medals in the 200m Backstroke and the 400m Medley Relay. She also holds a Bronze medal in the 100m Backstroke. Originally from Huntsville, Alabama, Margaret attended Auburn University, where she was a 22-time All-American and a 6-time National Champion.

Since retiring in 2010, Margaret has been happily residing in the Pacific Northwest. She teaches private swim lessons and frequently travels for swim clinics and motivational speaking. Margaret is an accomplished public speaker and vocal advocate for victims of sexual abuse, having given speeches on Tedx and at various conferences and fundraisers around the country. In her speeches, Margaret shares her personal experience as a survivor of sexual abuse. She focuses on lighting the path toward healing for other victims, their families, and friends.

Margaret is currently the National Spokesperson for the National Children's Advocacy Center and a featured survivor in the training video 'Stewards of Children' by Darkness to Light. She has also been involved with USA Swimming's Safe Sport program since its inception in 2010. She has also worked with the US Olympic Committee in forming their Safe Sport Program. To book Margaret, contact [mjhoelzer@hotmail.com](mailto:mjhoelzer@hotmail.com).



# THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

By Rebecca Schwartz

Growing up, my parents made it a priority for our family to volunteer and support our community. I remember waking up, putting on our matching t-shirts, and braving cold October mornings to set up for an early Race for the Cure. Every year, we did this with tired eyes and big smiles, happy to be part of the larger community that understood what it felt like to have loved ones who had battled cancer. The sometimes quiet and sometimes incredibly loud moments, laughing and coming together with total strangers, always left me feeling proud, happy, and supported. This tradition continued from elementary school through adulthood, is one that my husband has now adopted, and one we plan on continuing with our future family.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that as an adult, my career path gravitated towards helping others, ultimately landing at the Washington D.C. Police Foundation. The Foundation supports the many outreach and youth programming efforts of the Washington Metropolitan Police Department. I work with compassionate law enforcement officers to build a



brighter future for city youth and a safer city for everyone. It is rewarding to watch officers and youth program participants learn from one another and establish a greater understanding of law enforcement's role in the community. The officers invest in their students, judging science fairs, helping with homework, and simply become a sounding board when they have a bad day. The warmth and enthusiasm they exude are why I have been happily

building our programs and operations for almost eight years now.

Through our outreach, the Foundation serves over 13,000 youth annually, connecting officer mentors with families throughout the city. Fostering a volunteer spirit by giving back locally is an essential theme in all our programs. We want each child to know that they can make a positive change in their homes and communities. A few years ago, our 5th grade Junior Cadet program spent a very rainy day beautifying the front garden at one elementary school. Although the weather was far from ideal, the Cadets' excitement kept them out all day planting flowers and vegetables. They were proud of what they accomplished, cheered on by one of our favorite officer mentors, Keith Williams. He would quietly guide them as they planted seeds too close, teaching them so they could eventually share their newly acquired skills with fellow classmates. Everyone had fun that day, laughing in the rain and creating new memories. The Cadets were proud of their garden, showing it to their families and friends throughout the year.

In March of 2020, programs were put



*"The Cadets were proud of their garden, showing it to their families and friends throughout the year."*

on hold as the pandemic moved throughout the country. Officer Williams and his colleagues continued to work long hours patrolling the city and keeping everyone around them safe. In June of 2020, I received the devastating phone call that Officer Williams had passed away from COVID-19. I remember the sinking feeling in my stomach followed by days of trying to make sense of the sudden loss. Officer William's impact will not be forgotten; every day, he gave back to the community by working with our students and spreading kindness. As we reach the anniversary of his passing, we plan to have a ceremony in the same garden he worked in with the Junior Cadets.

As the summer continued and youth programming resumed, we knew the pandemic required a modified approach. With the help of our partners, we found ways to continue connecting officers to the communities they serve.

### Reading Together

Parents with Preparedness's *Lucky the Preparedness Dog* books have been an excellent tool in teaching youth some essential lessons throughout the pandemic. The PWP team dedicated the first set of Lucky books to honor Officer Williams and his career serving the community. While initially used for virtual learning, we now can hold distanced gatherings in parks so that youth can meet and read with an officer. Not only are the officers reading to youth, but we encourage them to then give back by reading to younger siblings. By sharing their experiences and

learned lessons with others, the impact continues.

### Getting Creative

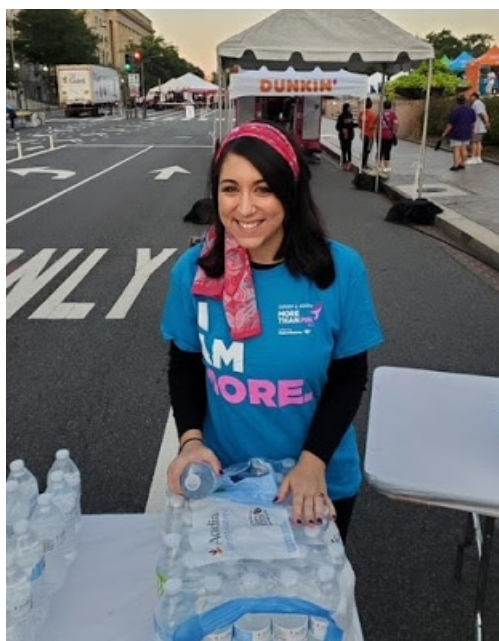
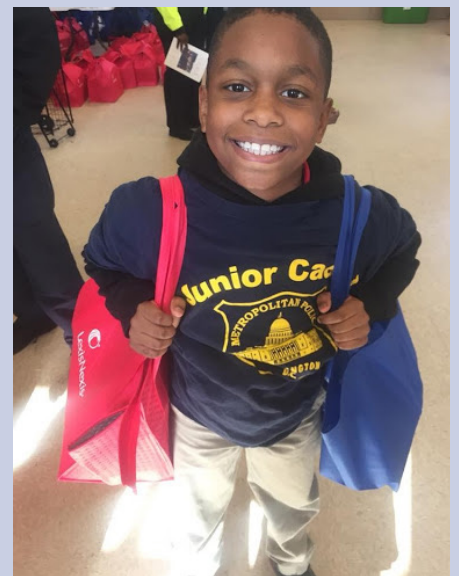
Some of our most successful initiatives used the arts to support the community in a meaningful way. Students created murals at police stations, beautified local parks, and soon will be welding recovered weapons into abstract art. These projects had little cost, took place outside, and most importantly, built positive relationships between officer mentors and student participants. Not only did the students enjoy being creative and expressing themselves, but their work was visible and permanent within their neighborhoods. They now walk by their artwork regularly, taking pride in the positive change they created, inspired to play a more active role within their community.

### Start Writing

Over the last year, we have been overwhelmed by letters and drawings received in appreciation of first responders. In January alone, over 500 letters were delivered from families and individuals throughout the country, thanking the D.C. police for protecting the Capitol building. Drawing a picture or making a hand-written card may seem like a small act, but it can significantly impact overall morale. Letter writing also opens a critical dialogue with children about how they feel about the world around them. While we have always encouraged local youth to draw pictures and write cards to officers, the kind words shared throughout the pan-

demie felt more needed than ever before.

When I reflect on the last year, I am so appreciative of my role within the Foundation. All the chaos of the pandemic was matched by the amount of good experienced each day. I challenge everyone to channel the passion and drive of our officers and youth. Take some time to volunteer and give back with your children; it will instill confidence and give them a creative outlet. Find a cause that matters not only to you but to them; it may be something they follow and support for years to come. Those small moments volunteering together are the ones they will remember throughout their life. Creating the next generation of compassionate leaders is how we make this world a better place. 📌



## ABOUT REBECCA SCHWARTZ

Rebecca Schwartz has been with the Washington D.C. Police Foundation since 2013 and is currently the Director of Development & Operations. She works collaboratively with the Washington Metropolitan Police Department to develop and execute meaningful programs that impact youth and community.

Her focus is on building partnerships that support a variety of initiatives with the shared goal of making the city a safer place for everyone to live, work and visit. Prior to her career at the Foundation, she worked in business development for an operational and tactical distributor for the military and government. There, she developed custom solutions for Navy Seabees at a national level. She is actively involved with the Foundations Section of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, where she organizes and supports discussions on Police Foundations nationally.

Rebecca is originally from Upstate New York, where she studied Business Administration and Communications at the State University of New York at Geneseo.



# HELPING YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND AND EXPRESS EMOTIONS IN *A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD*

By Melanie Upright

**T**oday's world is fraught with daily concerns that invade day-to-day discussions at home, work, and school. As we listen, our bodies tell us how we feel about these concerns. We may feel a sinking sensation in our stomachs, a tightening in our chest, or even a headache developing. As adults, we share how the news is stressing us out or how excited we are to meet the new addition to the family. Managing our emotions is a skill that many of us take for granted as something we just know how to do. But in actuality, managing our emotions effectively requires the development of many smaller skills, all of which need to be taught to children in some way. Children are learning how to navigate their emotions well into adolescence and beyond.

As the world has decreased our contact with people due to the risks of Covid-19 transmission, we have simultaneously increased the use of technology. This combination may make our children vulnerable to difficulties developing the subskills needed to manage our emotions effectively. Even before the pandemic, early use of technology by young children had already been found to impact social-emotional development and the emergence of expressive language in some children.

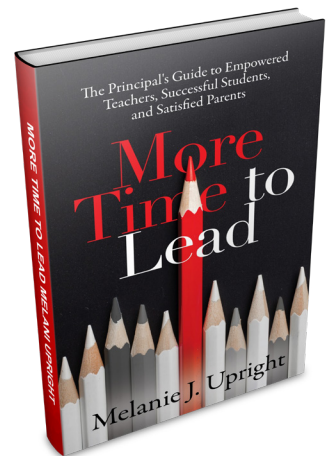
Increasing risk factors elevate the need for direct instruction in understanding and expressing emotions. However, to understand the emotions of another (e.g., take the perspective of another), we first must learn to recognize and name emotions within ourselves. And this

is where you, as your child's parent and first teacher, come in. As a parent, you know how important it is to talk with your child about everything. By helping your child navigate the emotional challenges of virtual, hybrid, and in-person instruction (all while wearing a mask), you are targeting the growth of their emotional vocabulary, knowledge, and expression. As a speech-language pathologist, I recommend a few simple ideas that can help your child learn about their reaction to emotions and to recognize emotions in others.

1. Talk about how emotions feel in your body and then label the emotion. When you are with your child, notice how you feel and describe it. "It's almost time for the movie to start. My stomach feels like it has butterflies." "I stubbed my toe. My toe hurts, and my body is tense." Describing how our bodies react when we feel an emotion can seem awkward at first, so don't give up! After describing the emotion you feel in your body, label it with an emotion word. "I feel excited." "I'm so upset."
2. Through pictures or a television show, describe how people look and sound, and then label the emotion. Just as previously stated, drawing your attention to how others look and sound will help your child observe these characteristics in others. For example, "His eyebrows are pointed down, and his chest is puffed up. He looks angry."
3. Role-play how emotions look and sound.

Practicing how an emotion might feel helps children develop a deeper understanding of emotion words and characteristics.

4. Remember to go beyond the basics of happy, sad, and mad. Children need to learn many words to understand their own emotions and the emotions of others. ■



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to [Melanie.Upright@gmail.com](mailto:Melanie.Upright@gmail.com)



## ABOUT MELANIE UPRIGHT

Melanie Upright has more than twenty years of experience in education. She is the author of *More Time to Lead: The Principal's Guide to Empowered Teachers, Successful Students and Satisfied Parents* and creator of *Four Perspectives: A Framework for Helping Struggling Learners*. She currently serves as a coordinator in special education for the Charles County Public Schools. Melanie incorporates systems thinking and collaborative practice to solve complex problems of challenging students. With her unique background as a speech-language pathologist, she has led projects that reduce the achievement gap in elementary mathematics, bring classroom management support to new teachers, and address access and equity problems in areas such as early reading development and communicative competency.

She serves as the co-chair of the Maryland State Steering Committee for SLPs. She co-teaches *Advanced Instructional Strategies* through Johns Hopkins University. She has a Master of Science degree from Towson University in Speech-Language Pathology. Melanie believes in the potential of all students and the magic of the classroom.

# LET'S NOT LEAVE *ANYONE* BEHIND

By Anna Stewart

**G**rocery list in hand, I sat on the bench by the door to tie my shoes. My phone was open next to me alongside my car keys. "Active shooter at Table Mesa King Soopers. Stay away." A friend from the neighborhood started posting to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. "I'm in my car, trying to get out. I can hear gunshots. OMG!"

Hours later, staying safe at home, we heard that the lone young man killed ten people. He killed my neighbors, young employees, and a 52-year old woman with disabilities who had worked at that specific King Soopers in Boulder, Colorado, for 30 years. There were other employees with disabilities working there. There were regular customers with disabilities who frequented the store. A young, blind woman shops there with her popular guide dog and has for many years. My daughter with disabilities shops there.

What if they had been in the store?

While we can't prepare for everything, we can prepare for much more than many of us do. I survived (as did my house) the 1989 San Francisco earthquake that knocked down freeways and shook fans during the World Series. I was able to stay in my home as firefighters dealt with ablaze in the foothills I could see from my window. But, living through something is not the same as being prepared to handle emergencies.

After the King Sooper shooting, I went through a list of things to do for my young adult daughter, who has an intellectual disability. Like many of her peers, she had no idea she could enter the back of the store or go up to the break room in an emergency. She didn't know that those were options, and I realized I hadn't done enough to prepare her to be confident moving around her community.

I work for a local school district with

families who have children with disabilities. One mom came to me asking for help getting the school to develop a safety plan for her daughter, who is non-verbal and needs assistance pushing her wheelchair. "They don't have a plan for how to protect her in an emergency. What can I do?" She wasn't the only student who needed to be prepared.

We made a list of considerations for creating a safety plan for students with disabilities. We wanted to address situations such as:

1. Limited mobility (no stairs or steps)
2. Unlikely to remain quiet
3. Unaware of personal options
4. Triggered by alarms, first responders, weapons, or noise
5. Past trauma creating unpredictable behavior
6. Elopement





Then we looked at tools and strategies to mitigate the identified situations, which included:

1. Practice using picture cards and social stories to give visual cues for what to expect and how to behave.
2. In schools, stores, libraries-places the person frequents-walk through and look at emergency exits and employee-only areas.
3. Create a calming box/basket with earplugs, fidgets, stuffies, favorite toys, lollipops (to help with staying quiet), gum, or other safe, preferred, chewy foods.
4. Involve staff and peers in making a plan for how to move a person with limited mobility to safe spaces (have spaces identified on different floors and buildings).
5. Attach an ID card to shoes or wrist in case of separation.
6. Register with local police to share that a person with disabilities resides at your address (if they don't have a program like that yet, request that they start one).
7. Use pre-teaching with role-playing to practice what to do in specific emergencies.
8. Practice stay-calm techniques when things are calm. Give choices, then let the person decide which strategies to use (deep breaths, counting, squeezing hands/body, washing hands, self-talk, playing music, reading, drawing, etc.).
9. Give lots of specific praise when a person with disabilities uses appropriate strategies, even if it is only a part of what is needed. Then, connect the dots to share why it's essential.



10. Model all of the above in many different settings on an ongoing basis.

We don't want to forget to prepare our vulnerable friends and neighbors so that we all stay safe. While individuals may not fully understand emergencies or struggle with a safe response, it falls on family, friends, and good neighbors to ensure that they are supported and provided accommodations.

We need to partner with people with disabilities and not decide we know what is best for them. For example, if your children are school-aged, it's okay to contact the school and ask about their planning. Working together, everyone can trust they have a solid plan, contingencies in place, and a calm approach to people and the situations that arise. 🍎



## ABOUT ANNA STEWART

Anna Stewart writes about parenting and disabilities for a wide range of publications, including Empowering Parents, San Jose Mercury News, ESME, and many others over the past few decades.

She works with families living with disabilities, advocates for social justice, and parents two young adults with disabilities.

# COMMUNITY HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION

By Dr. Christian Nanry



**T**he most effective preventative and responsive aspect of combating human trafficking is you. “You” means every member of the community cohesively sharing knowledge on how to identify red flags of human trafficking, understand how traffickers utilize technology and recruit victims in vulnerable situations, and act on the information which could save a victim’s life. It is crucial to address vulnerabilities shared among victims of human trafficking and those specific to individual and social conditions.

In many cases, citizens in all walks of life can potentially observe red flags of human trafficking and not know it. Human trafficking can occur in any neighborhood or setting, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or culture. Red flags also vary based on the targeted groups and specifics of a trafficker’s objectives. Children who are being manipulated often communicate with traffickers through social media accounts and prepared encounters. Traffickers will use resources such as money, food, shelter, and jewelry to manipulate and entice the

child. Additionally, look for signs of physical abuse and sudden behavior changes. Foreign national laborers often live in large groups within a domicile and are transported to and from work by specific individuals who control their movements. In most cases, these victims are being held by debt bondage. Their documents may be confiscated, and they cannot leave their situation.

It is estimated human traffickers generate \$150 billion in US currency annually from the use of sex and labor in the private economy. However, two-thirds of annual profits earned comes from sexual exploitation. Women and young girls are disproportionately represented at 71% of all trafficking victims. An estimated 3.8 million adults are victims of sexual exploitation, and 99% of those victims were young girls and women. It is important to note men and young boys are also victims of human trafficking. As heightened awareness from collaborating entities uniting to investigate, prevent, disrupt, and dismantle human trafficking criminal networks, those numbers could increase.

A shift in emphasis has recently oc-

curred in the fight against human trafficking. Sharing knowledge and awareness is now being coupled and predicated by preventative measures focusing on underlying risk factors. Task forces and collaborators are using data-driven, evidence-based practice registries to leverage against the six primary characteristics of human trafficking prevention strategies:

- improving and maintaining individual knowledge and skills;
- promote active community education;
- educate the providers of this knowledge;
- foster coalitions and networks to develop and expand;
- change current and potentially outdated or inept organizational practices;
- strive to create effective and encompassing policy.

Promoting awareness of human trafficking is essential to develop the foundation on what it is and the impact this activity has on its victims. Awareness alone cannot derail the human trafficking enterprise; it is now being suggested collaborators use analytic data tech-



niques paired with proper social applications to effectively and efficiently mitigate this global epidemic.

Community-based programs, customized by familiarity to the vulnerabilities across diverse groups, have the potential to prevent human trafficking before it mobilizes. This approach focuses on the potential victimized groups or institutions such as neighborhoods, medical health facilities, schools, businesses, and individual or social pools. In this approach, children and parents are taught to identify red flags and report human trafficking to the proper authorities and build the necessary skills to resist exploitation and the organizations working together within their communities. Increasingly, medical personnel and teachers are often provided training on identifying signs of trafficking and how and who to contact in case of a disclosure of abuse. In addition, some businesses are educated on how they may unknowingly be connected to human trafficking, to sever those connections, and work with authorities to investigate, remediate, and prosecute traffickers. By providing each individual group education and revelation, human trafficking groups are removed from their silos and exposed with the goal of preventing germination.

Recently researchers at Carnegie Mellon and McGill University created an algorithm that identifies online ads for escorts to locate traffickers and their victims. This algorithm, called InfoShield, identifies anomalies in sampled data clusters. In this study, researchers stated the majority of suspected human trafficking ads are written by a single person, who controls four to six different victims simultaneously. Researchers identified small clusters of ads containing similar or exact communication. They found the individuals following these criteria are more than likely to be of an organized activity, which is a strong indicator of human trafficking. InfoShield is designed to streamline and expedite investigative searches by clustering selected groups together and summarizing commonality. Commonality does not denote guilt. Instead, it illuminates significant suspicious activity.

I hope readers of this article, for example, parents, children, law enforcement, entrepreneurs, teachers, and medical personnel, will become empowered to connect and collaborate with various organizations in their ecosphere and learn all they can about human trafficking and their victims. More importantly, to alert authorities if they believe they have witnessed or know any form of human trafficking. This ability to act will save lives.

As a private citizen, if you recognize signs of human tracking, do not approach or engage the situation, instead call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or 1-866-347-2423 to Federal law enforcement. 📍

## RESOURCES

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[CLICK HERE](#)

## ABOUT DR. CHRISTIAN NANRY



Christian A. Nanry has worked as a Military Policeman and Criminal Investigator since 1996. His experiences include time as a Military Working Dog Handler, Special Reaction Team member, Fugitive and Threat Investigator, Protective Services, Training Cadre member, and worked on various operational and logistical committees.

He holds an undergraduate degree from Empire State College, a master's degree from Seton Hall University, and a Doctorate of Philosophy from Texas State University.

# ONLINE PREDATORS DON'T TAKE A SUMMER VACATION

By Michael Breslin

**T**remendous strain is placed on parents having to manage the uncertainty and risk in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic along with the physical, emotional, and educational needs of their children. People have been forced to change the way they live, work, and interact with each other. To say that the past year has been challenging is a major understatement. As the summer months draw near and schools take a recess from in-person and distance learning, many families will seek a much-needed break.

While the summer vacation season provides family respite from the past year's demands and helps renew the resiliency families require to ensure their well-being, all parents and caregivers must always be mindful that predators never take a vacation from seeking ways to entice and exploit children. Parents must be cautious 100% of the time while predators only have to be lucky once, and the consequences can be dire.

## **Serious Threats - Child Identity Theft Fraud And Online Sexual Exploitation**

Unfortunately, cyber threats continue to grow in scale and sophistication. The adverse financial and personal impact

on people's lives continues to morph with every evolution of cyber scams and criminal activity. The internet is a permanent component in society, an enabler of global commerce, education, health, and interconnectedness. It is as much a force for good as it is a potential risk to the very societal institutions and people who have become dependent on a robust and safe internet. Children represent an at-risk population in all things cyber-related, from being potential victims of identity theft to the heinous crimes of online sexual exploitation of children.

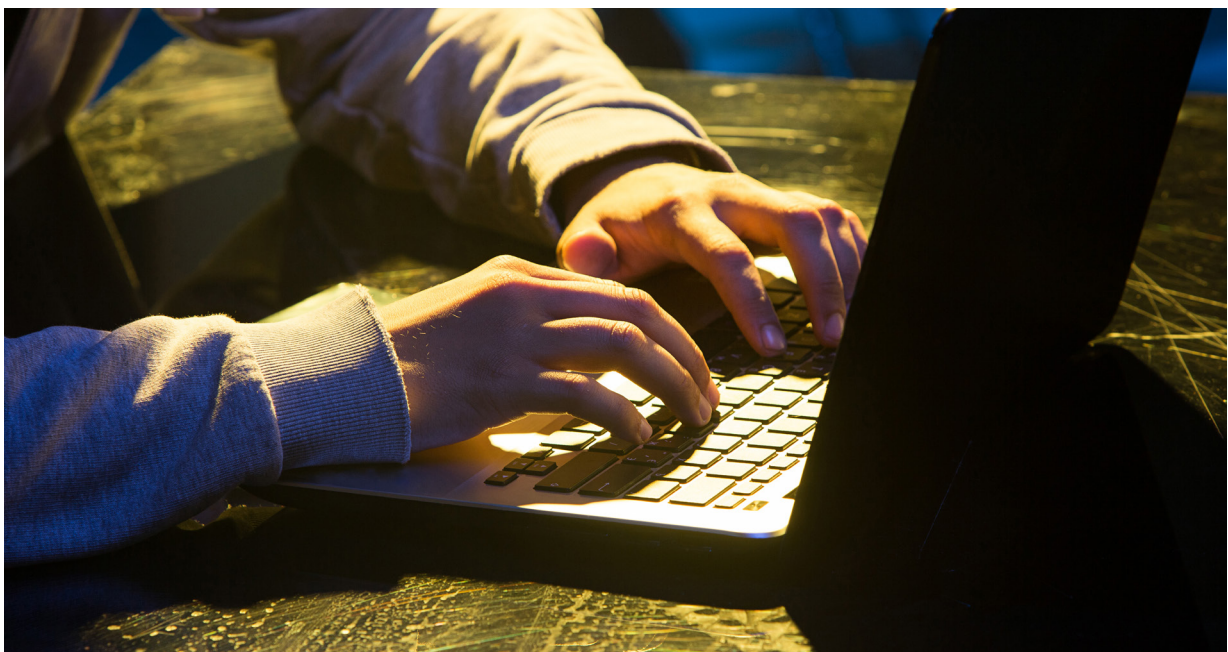
Advances in computer technology and greater access to the internet have created online marketplaces for transnational cyber criminals to share stolen information such as credit card data and personally identifiable information (PII). All would agree that one's child is your most precious and priceless asset, to be protected against all threats and dangers. What about a child's PII? There is a price for this information on dark web forums, and the damage to repair can be costly and time-consuming. Your child's identity (DOB, SSN) is a gold mine to fraudsters and can be purchased on the dark web for as little as \$1. How often have you run your child's credit history to

check for fraudulent activity? If you are like most people, the answer is never.

Criminals target and profit from our children's PII. For instance, a child's SSN combined with other pieces of factual information can be used by criminals to create fictitious identities, a crime known as synthetic identity fraud. This fraud is a growing problem in the United States, as evidenced by a recent Carnegie Mellon University's CyLab study which found that children are 51 times more likely to be victims of identity theft than adults. Parents need to safeguard their children's sensitive information to every extent possible.

## **A Daunting Challenge**

Child exploitation is a major problem in our country with far-reaching impact and lasting societal consequences. It is an unfortunate reality that missing and exploited children continue to be a massive challenge globally. The spread of online Child Sexual Abuse Material, online grooming, and child sex trafficking are some of the threats facing children. The popularity and wide use of gaming apps also pose a venue for predators to target children for exploitation. The impact of stay-at-home restrictions translates to







children spending increased time online, often unsupervised, and a decrease in opportunities for mandated reporters to notice signs of abuse.

According to the [National Center for Missing & Exploited Children](#) (NCMEC), more than 21.7 million suspected online child sexual exploitation reports were made to their CyberTipline in 2020. One form of exploitation reported to the CyberTipline is child sex trafficking. Of the more than 26,500 endangered runaways reported to NCMEC in 2020, one in six were likely victims of child sex trafficking. Today, the average age of child sex trafficking victims reported missing to NCMEC is a mere 15 years old.

#### Tips For Parents

- Protect your computer and all electronic devices while on vacation, at airports, hotels, etc
- Talk to your children about protecting themselves and not sharing personal data
- Good cyber hygiene practices help reduce risk
- Remain vigilant in monitoring activity
- Create unique and complex passwords
- Teach your child about identity theft and online safety
- Safeguard your child's sensitive documents
- Watch for mail in your child's name
- Review your statements and report suspected fraud to the institution and law enforcement

- Exercise care with your child's sensitive information and accounts
- Scrutinize all email attachments
- Password protect your Wi-Fi
- Install and update antivirus and antispyware software
- Secure your internet browser and browser add-ons
- Freeze your child's credit
- Practice a healthy amount of skepticism of anyone, particularly online, that requests information about your child

Always keep in mind there are as many recommended tips and best practices geared towards effective mitigation of the cyber threats posed to your children as there are ways for criminals to circumvent and exploit the inherent vulnerabilities. However, the influence of the child and parent in this process cannot be overlooked. People contribute to and detract from their security and safety surrounding online activity and transactions.

Protecting your data, the security of your personal digital devices, and your child's online activity, comes down to your proactive engagement. The stronger your defense posture and mitigation plan, the more likely the cyber attacker or predator will opt for an easier target. Personal accountability should be a part of any family cyber-safety plan, whether at work, home, or while on vacation. ■

#### RESOURCES

- § [child-identity-theft.pdf \(cmu.edu\)](#)
- § [checklists\\_kids.pdf \(justice.gov\)](#)
- § [Teach Your Kids Cyber Hygiene \(and Freeze Their Credit\) | DIAMOND CU](#)
- § [2020 Data Breach Investigations Report: Official | Verizon Enterprise Solutions](#)
- § [Child Identity Theft – What to Know, What to Do \(ftc.gov\)](#)
- § [Child Identity Theft | FTC Consumer Information](#)
- § [Identity Theft | USA.Gov](#)
- § [Home \(missingkids.org\)](#)
- § [Child Sexual Abuse Material \(missingkids.org\)](#)
- § <https://report.cybertip.org>
- § [Mobile Magic or Download Danger? How Apps Can Put Your Kids At Risk - Child Rescue Coalition](#)
- § [adamprogram.com](#)



## ABOUT MICHAEL BRESLIN

Michael has more than two decades of experience in federal law enforcement and transnational financial and cybercrime investigations. He serves on the Cyber Investigations Advisory Board of the U.S. Secret Service and is the Strategic Client Relations Director for Federal Law Enforcement at LexisNexis Risk Solutions. Before joining LexisNexis Risk Solutions,

Michael served as Deputy Assistant Director for the Office of Investigations for the Secret Service, where he oversaw the planning and coordination of investigative responsibilities. Michael is also a Board Member for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

# THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

By Rick Rapier

**L**ike the family, storytelling has been integral to cohesive societies for ages. It's been shared an infinite number of times since it was first reported following the 1980 US Census. In all likelihood, you've heard it repeated today, by the media, in an article here, or from the mouth of someone you know: America has a 50% divorce rate. Right?

This "knowledge" that America has a 50% divorce rate has shaped the very state of marriage in our culture today. Almost every movie or TV show features divorce or people avoiding marriage for fear of it ending in divorce. Even kids' shows feature children of divorce and kids living in single-parent homes, all with the intention of better reflecting "the reality."



And this 'statistic' is having a profound effect: Young adults are staying off marriage in record numbers. By 2010, almost half of Americans aged 18 to 29 thought that marriage was becoming "obsolete." More children are born out of wedlock than within it. For millennia, the bedrock of human society is now a relic of the past, tried only by fools or romantics. So

what's the point when marriage is a 50-50 gamble?

But the question is, Is the story true? In a word, no. And it never has been.

For the most recent year reported by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) 2019, the divorce rate is 2.7%. No, that isn't a misprint nor a typo. In 2010, the divorce rate was 3.6%; in 2000, it was 4%. So, for several reasons, the divorce rate is actually falling, not rising. (The 50% error was, in part, created by dividing the number of divorces in 1980 by the number of marriages, without considering the millions of intact marriages from previous decades). The 50% divorce rate was logically flawed out of the gate, but it seemed right to the reporter, and so was reported. The shocking error wasn't challenged and so has

been repeated to this very day by people willing to believe it. Why would they repeat it if it weren't true?

Well, marriage isn't easy, plus we all know someone who is divorced. But more than anything, as Joseph Goebbels infamously said, "If you repeat a lie often enough, people will believe it, and you will even come to believe it yourself."

This example offers a dramatic study of the impact that storytellers wield in society. As the image above suggests, they have for eons. Christians know well the teaching, "To whom much is given, much is required." Spider-Man fans well know his mantra, "With great power comes great responsibility." And it has become clear that storytellers have the power to impact society — positively and negatively.

In my own industry, the motion picture business, we see the impact storytelling has on our families and society.

Critics have written much of censorship associated with what came to be known as the Hays Code or just "the Code," officially known as The Motion Picture Production Code, enacted in 1930 but not fully enforced until 1934. Many people are unaware that pre-Code movies had already begun to feature nudity and so on. Albeit under pressure from civic and religious leaders to deal with the moral decline and criminality movies were causing, "the Code" was used voluntarily by Hollywood to govern its film production. It included a set of "General Principles," shaped with the help of various civic and religious leaders:

1. No [motion] picture shall be produced that will lower the moral standards of those who see it. Hence, the audience's sympathy should never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil, or sin.
2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.

3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

Of course, the application of the Code did lead to some somewhat laughable extensions, such as not using the word "pregnant" and not showing a husband and wife sleeping together. But what also emerged from this self-restraint positively impacted society: less delinquency, increased civic pride, patriotism, and respect for social institutions like religion, education, parental authority, marriage, and the Golden Rule.

Additionally, the Code resulted in what came to be known as the "Golden Age of Hollywood," and Hollywood's coffers were never more full. It was a win-win-win for studios, storytellers, and society.

But the will of Hollywood and the resolve of civic leaders began to wane, especially after the realities of World War II struck. To many, including French and German émigrés, the Code was a confining relic of an archaic system. By 1968, the Code was abandoned. And almost immediately, Hollywood set itself at odds with America and its traditional cultural norms, including those formerly fostered by their stories.

While filmmakers thrilled at their newfound freedom, executives quickly faced a backlash from the public. In little more than one year, per capita, movie attendance nosedived by roughly 40% and never rebounded.

As the saying goes, "Just because you can do something doesn't mean you should." And from that fateful decision, Hollywood has paid a price, but so has American society. Societal norms, both here and abroad, have been reshaped in the image of the Hollywood subculture, for good or ill, and its impact continues.

As a filmmaker and father, who has worked to overcome Hollywood's influence on me, I do my utmost within the framework





## ABOUT RICK RAPIER

of today's society to tell stories that will serve society well and responsibly. I also choose to align with other filmmakers who share this sense of responsibility. We are sobered by the power that film and television have to shape our children, our communities, and the world in which we live.

As a parent, you, too, are a powerful storyteller. You recount cautionary tales from your youth, heroic choices made by ancestors, lessons of history that have made life and society better for us all. Your children study everything you do and say and often repeat the stories you tell them or that they overhear. So, try always to tell a story with a learning element, even a humorous one of something you got wrong or perhaps got away with! But, in the end, storytellers can also, in error, impart destructive messages like a 50% divorce rate. So, whatever kind of storyteller we may be, we would do well to shoulder the role responsibly, considering the impact we make will echo in the future generations.

Given the influence of movies and TV, resources like CommonSenseMedia.org and MovieGuide.org can help you guide your family to stories that reinforce the power and positivity of family life and marriage. ■

### References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/marriage-divorce.htm>

The Case for Marriage by Linda Waite, Maggie Gallagher  
The Good News About Marriage: Debunking Discouraging Myths about Marriage and Divorce by Shaunti Feldhahn  
Hollywood vs. America: How-and-Why-the Entertainment Industry Has Broken Faith With Its Audience by Michael Medved

Annual Report to the Entertainment Industry by Dr. Ted Baehr, MovieGuide



Rick Rapier is a professional screenwriter-producer and co-founder of Red Wood Studios, LLC. In close collaboration with Philip Spilker of Metrostop Entertainment and industry professional Lisa Marie, and others, the future looks bright. Keep an eye out for films like *Pride of India*, *Against Her Will*, *Bandit's War*, *Secret Recipes*, and *Maui Michaels: Private Eye*, as well as TV series like "Agents of VAST," "King of the Highway," "Just Maintaining," and "Forget You, Phil!"

Originally from Illinois, Rick graduated from Eastern Illinois University. For 23 years, he has been married to his New Jersey soul mate, professional illustrator Flip Rapier, with whom he has two incredible adult children, Noelle and Luke. It's been a story-like adventure, thanks to their faith in God. The Rapiers currently reside in Arizona. [Redwood Studios](#); [Metrostop Entertainment, Inc.](#)

# COMBATING MISINFORMATION ONLINE, ONE MEME AT A TIME

by Dr. Vesna Markovic and Kimberley M. Skubic

Kids spend between 6 to 9 hours online daily, excluding the time they spend online during the school day. Unfortunately, harmful content persists on social media, including falsehoods that can lead to targeted violence. As of 2021, only two states require media literacy courses in public schools. This statistic became the impetus for the creation of How2INFORM (H2I). H2I is an initiative designed to engage middle school and high school students in fact-based research to combat the rise of dangerous images and messaging on social media. Misinformation, disinformation, malinformation, and conspiracy theories persist on social media. These H2I resources can facilitate critical thinking, particularly while consuming social media. Here is what parents and students need to know to keep themselves safe online this summer!

**INFORM** is an acronym that can help your kids identify harmful content present in memes or other social media content.

## I—Investigate & Identify

Investigate the source.

Identify the writer/author, website, & intended audience.

## N—Narrative & Tone

Consider the narrator's message and tone.

Does it make sense & seem believable?

Is it written to inform, entertain, or persuade?

## F—Fact or Fiction

Find & verify facts. Do you have doubts about the claim?

Are there grammatical errors and lots of punctuation????!!

## O—Opinion & Context

Recognize opinion & bias.

Could the message/meme be viewed as offensive?

## R—Reliable & Credible

Confirm source (writer/author, website) is trustworthy.

Verify name/organization, logo, &

"About" info of their website.

Confirm site is not "satirical" or "fantasy" news.

Are claims believable? Do other credible

sources support them?

## M—Misleading or Manipulative

Determine if info is misleading or manipulative. Label it an example of misinformation, disinformation, or malinformation. Is it related to a conspiracy theory?

**Helpful tips:** *Information may appear in many places online, but that doesn't mean you can automatically believe it. Trusted sources fact-check reported information & can support their findings. Remain skeptical until you confirm news is true, especially before spreading it online.*

*For balanced news:* [CLICK HERE](#)

The following is a guide on how your kids can use INFORM to determine misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.

## MISINFORMATION

Misinformation is false information that has been disproven. The original author or creator may believe the information and share it with good intentions; but doing so causes others that see it, believe it, and spread the false info even further. In some cases, misinformation causes harm.

On April 2, 2021, artist/rapper Earl Simmons, better known as DMX, suffered a heart attack. On April 8, 2021, NBA player Karl-Anthony Towns sent a tweet (since deleted) indicating DMX died. Montrezl Harrell then shared the tweet shown below. Both tweets caused rumors of DMX's death to spread rapidly; the topic even trended on Twitter. That night, Steve Rifkin, DMX's manager, released an Instagram video asking the public to give DMX's family time and space during the difficult time. He explained the rapper was on life support but still alive. Though the original messages were sent by people that seemingly cared about DMX, the misinformation they spread caused unnecessary harm to others.



Using INFORM to review the message, we find:

**I**—The primary source here is Montrezl Harrell. The audience is Twitter users.

**N**—It seems believable DMX could have died on April 8, 2021, since he had a heart attack on April 2.

**F**—AP, a reliable news source, reported DMX's passing on April 9, 2021. Before that, rumors were being spread of DMX's death without confirmation from news outlets.

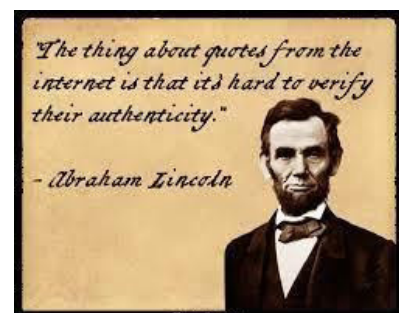
**O**—Harrell seems emotional in the tweet.

**R**—This source is a celebrity, not a known credible news source. This claim is believable, but there was no credible confirmation of DMX's death when the tweet was sent.

**M**—The information is misleading and an example of misinformation. It is not related to a conspiracy theory.

## DISINFORMATION

Disinformation is created to mislead, harm, or manipulate a person, social group, organization, or country. The author/creator is aware the information is untrue but creates and spreads the message on social media anyway. The meme features a photo of Abraham Lincoln and a quote credited to him. The style is popular on social media.





Using INFORM to review the meme, we find:

**I**—The primary source is unknown. The audience is Internet users.

**N**—Designed to entertain. WH.gov shows Lincoln lived from 1809-1865. History.com shows the Internet was introduced during the Cold War, long after Lincoln died.

**F**—The meme is fiction, based on what we learned in the previous step.

**O**—The opinion/bias is unknown.

**R**—The source is unknown.

**M**—The information is misleading and an example of disinformation. It is not related to a conspiracy theory. Since Lincoln is such a recognizable historical figure, it was likely created as a joke and would not lead to harm.

### MALINFORMATION

Malinformation is information based on fact, but taken out of context to deliberately harm, manipulate, or mislead others. The meme below shows an image symbolizing Coronavirus. A label with “Made in China” appears on the image, mimicking stickers found on consumer goods originally produced in China. This meme represents many posts, images, and memes of similar messaging circulating online since the pandemic began.

Using INFORM to review the message, we find:



**I**—The primary source here is unknown. The audience is Internet users.

**N**—It seems designed to inform or persuade. It stems from the fact that Covid-19 is believed to have started in China, but implies it was purposely created.

**F**—On April 9, 2021, ABC News reported that scientists are still researching the origin of Covid-19. So, it is unfair, mean-spirited, and dangerous to jump to conclusions and place blame until proper research has been done, facts have been reported, and credible news outlets support information.

**O**—The meme creator blames China for the virus. Bias is against the country of China.

**R**—The sources are not known. The claim is unsupported by reliable news outlets.

**M**—The information is misleading, dangerous, and an example of malinformation. The Conspiracy Chart created by researcher Abbie Richards lists it as a conspiracy theory.

When you spot harmful memes like this online, do not share them! 🚫



Social/Digital Links

TikTok: @how2inform

Instagram: @how2inform

YouTube: Channel is H2I is How2INFORM [CLICK HERE](#)

Website: [CLICK HERE](#)

## ABOUT DR. VESNA MARKOVIC



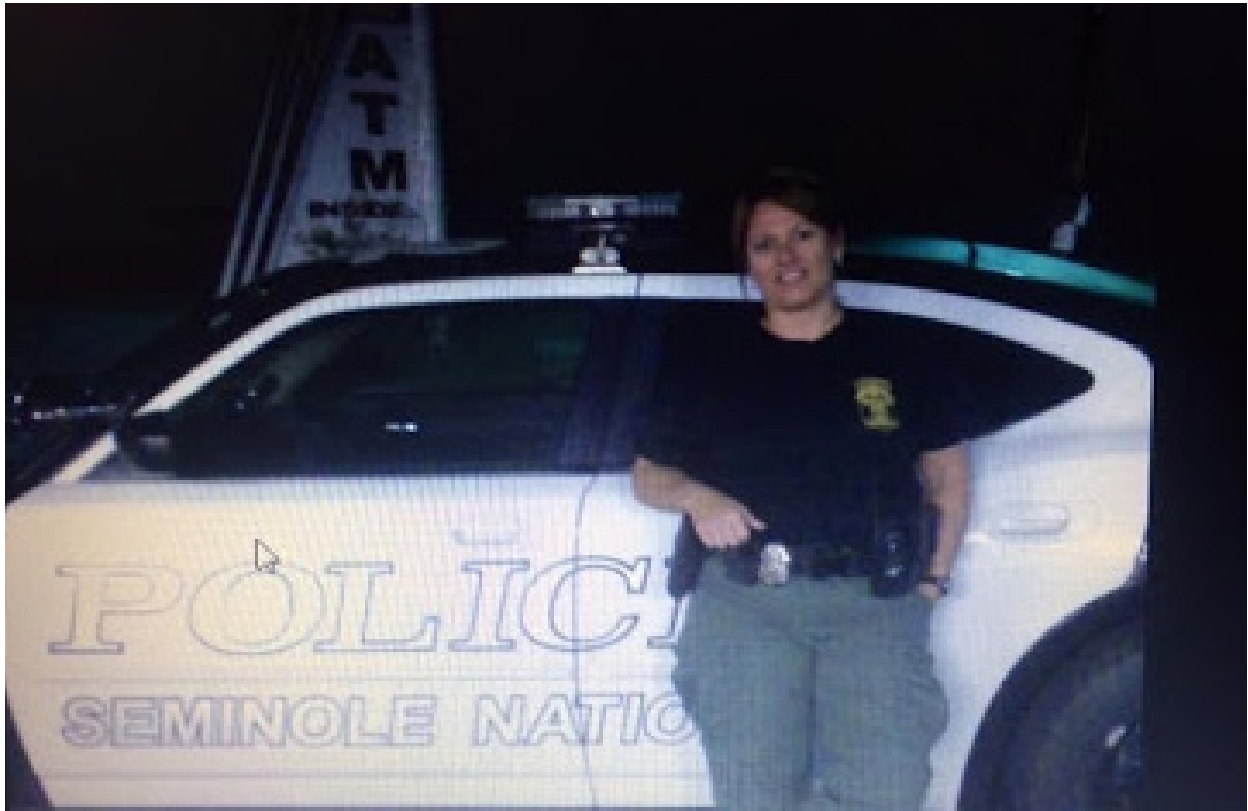
Dr. Markovic is currently a Professor in criminal justice and Chair in the Justice, Law, and Public Safety Studies Department at Lewis University in Romeoville, IL. Her research focuses specifically on suicide bombings, financing terrorism, low-tech attacks, transnational crime, and comparative criminal justice. Dr. Markovic has published numerous peer-reviewed articles in these areas, as well as an op-ed in Forbes magazine. She is a senior lecturer for NATO Center of Excellence Defense Against Terrorism in Ankara, Turkey, and was previously an instructor with the International Law Enforcement Academy in Roswell, New Mexico.

Dr. Markovic also recently completed a Ted X Lewis University “The Connecticut Hall of Change: Honoring Human Growth and Contributions to the Community” ([CLICK TO WATCH](#)). She also recently mentored a team of students in the Invent 2 Prevent, which focused on preventing targeted violence. The project resulted in the How 2 INFORM project discussed in this article. She holds a BA and MA in Criminal Justice from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and her Ph.D. in Criminal Justice from Sam Houston State University.

## ABOUT KIMBERLY M. SKUBIC



Kimberley M. Skubic received her Bachelor’s degree in Creative Writing from North Central College. Before moving into her current role as Director of a small non-profit, she had worked in project management and editing. Her interest in true crime led her to pursue a Master’s degree in Criminal Justice from Lewis University, where she acted as Team Lead for How2INFORM, an undergraduate and graduate student group designed to combat misinformation online.



# A JOURNEY TO HEALING

By Renee Bourque

I consider myself a strong Indigenous woman, a Mvskoke woman who has the blood of my ancestors flowing through my veins to guide me, give me strength, and stand for our people. I believe many people who know me would describe me this way as well.

However, many may not know and are generally shocked when I tell them that I am a survivor of domestic violence. I spent a decade dealing with the abuse from my children's father. It took ten years of my young adult life to learn how to "just leave." Being stuck in an abusive relationship for so long and not knowing how to leave is surprising to people who know me and my personality of taking action and being candid in my opinions. I have kept my story to myself to protect those closest to me; however, I now feel that sharing my experience may help others find their way on their journey and maybe even faster and better than I did. That would make me happy.

In my journey, I learned how to become my own advocate, learning to navigate the system and navigate my life and the life of my children; to keep us safe and keep us involved in the process. Trying to maintain my cultural identity in a community that was not sensitive to domestic violence issues, particularly those of Native women and children, was challenging, but I did it. If I were living on the reservation, This would be a "Tribal problem," but you see, I did not live on my reservation. I lived on state land, in Oklahoma's 'good ol' boy system.' In the 1990s, women's

*"WHEN WE TELL OUR STORY, IT IS PART OF THE HEALING PROCESS."*

issues did not receive as much attention as they do today, and it seemed as though the system did not care much for helping.

It took me 15 years to finally realize I was dealing with compacted trauma, or what some might call multiple layers of trauma. I dove headfirst into a job in which I felt our Creator sent me to as a Tribal domestic violence secretary. This job was the beginning of my healing journey, and this is my healing story.

As Native Americans, we are storytellers by nature. When we tell our story, it is a part of the healing process. However, whether you decide to tell your story or not, I feel that you are strong. It has taken me almost 20 years to tell my story and to feel comfortable doing so. Holding back was my way of protecting my children.

When people first meet me, they see the strength in my personality, which is very evident in my demeanor. Although folks are definitely taken aback when I mention my background as a survivor of domestic violence, more people are surprised by the titles that I have held and the career path that I have taken.



## ABOUT RENÉE BOURQUE

You do not normally expect someone who has been an advocate, a law enforcement officer, a federal victim service provider, as someone who fell victim to abuse. It does not seem to fit the narrative that many people have envisioned in their minds as a “victim of abuse.”

I have spent almost 20 years in advocacy and victims’ rights to help change the many stereotypes of victimization within Indian Country that still exist today. This is my strength. This is where I thrive. And this is where I find my ancestors are with me on my healing journey of advocacy. I truly believe anyone who works in the field of service does not wake up and choose the work; it is Creator-driven. Generally, some type of direct experience will put us on the path to help others. One thing is certain; we must all walk our own path. Some journeys may have yellow lines and directional arrows, and some may be an utterly blacked-out path with no direction. Whichever path you are on, know that you are on this journey for a reason. The process of healing is specific to each individual. There is no right or wrong way to heal; there is only healing. If you are being destructive, that only tells me you are surviving, not thriving. There is a distinct difference between the two and one that Native women have experienced since colonization and one carried forward as a part of the compacted historical trauma I referred to earlier. Instead of focusing on that trauma, I am trying to focus on the healing, which I want to pass along to the next generation of my family. And they, to theirs. The strength and resiliency that my ancestors carried on the Trail of Tears are what I hope to tap into every day to overcome the violent victimization that they, too, carried. Not to ignore or forget it, but to keep it in its very sacred state of my journey, on a path to overall healing. All survivors have healing journeys, and I am grateful I can share mine with others when I can.

MVTO

(Thank You) 🍀



Renee Bourque is a citizen of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma. Renee currently serves as the Program Director for the Victim Assistance to Support Tribes (VAST) Center for the National Center for Victims of Crime. Renee was recently appointed by Muscogee Nation, Principle Chief to the Mvskoke Reservation Protection Commission as a committee member for the Violence Against Native Women committee and the Co-Chair for the Law Enforcement and Public Safety Committee. Renee also serves as a subject matter expert for the International Association of Chiefs of Police. She is currently working with Operation Lady Justice Task Force and DOJ to develop a volunteer in policing program and make this available to Tribal communities.

Renee previously served as a federal Victim Specialist with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Great Plains Region (District I), serving victims of violent crimes on numerous reservations across Indian Country. Renee has held previous positions as a sworn police officer in Oklahoma (tribal and state), tribal domestic violence/sexual assault advocate, and a state investigator for the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System. Renee is also a Tribal Court Legal Advocate, certified by the National Tribal Trial College and University of Wisconsin Law School.

Renee has over 19 years of experience dealing with victims of crime in Indian Country, working on several different reservations, including Oklahoma’s complex checkerboard jurisdiction. She has extensive knowledge and experience assisting victims of crime, with an emphasis on crimes against women and children in tribal, state, and Federal court settings. Renee’s experience as an advocate and law enforcement officer provides a unique perspective on systems response in addressing victim’s needs. Renee hopes to use her experience and perspective to raise awareness of the unique issues facing victims of violent crime in Indian Country.

Renee holds a Bachelor’s of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from St. Gregory’s University, Shawnee, OK, and a Master’s of Science Degree in Human Resources (Criminal Justice) from East Central University, Ada, OK. Renee has worked on projects such as the Maze of Injustice with Amnesty International. She has been one of the leading voices for Native victims in Oklahoma. Renee has held several different positions on many community and national boards and has received a letter of acknowledgment from the South Dakota United States Attorney’s Office for work conducted on Pine Ridge Reservation. One of Renee’s career highlights was to receive an honoring ceremony from the Oglala Sioux Tribal Prosecutor, Tatewin Means and Oglala Lakota Children’s Justice Center for service to victims on Pine Ridge Reservation.



# SUMMER FAMILY FIRE PREPAREDNESS: BY Jared Goff

## SMOKE DETECTORS AND EVACUATION

In 2008, our family bought a new home because our kids were growing, and frankly, we needed the space. As a fire service professional and one that has seen the positive effects of smoke detectors, I decided to have some fun with our new home emergency plan. It was important to my wife and I that our young kids knew the smoke detector's sound and how to respond appropriately. I explained the goals of the "game," the desired meeting spot, and that I wanted them to find a way out of the house once they heard the alarm. So, we tucked them in bed and told them to pretend they were asleep. After a few minutes, I pushed the test button on the smoke detector until the deafening sound emanated from the device. Both kids jumped out of bed without delay, ran down the stairs, through the front door opening, and were waiting with huge smiles on their faces by the big tree in

the front yard - our desired meeting spot. For them, it was fun. My wife and I were proud that they accomplished this small but super important task.

After their hearts calmed down, we praised them, and then we went back upstairs to ask them about alternative routes. "So, kids, let's say that smoke is coming from the kitchen, and you could not get down the stairs; what would you do?" They looked around intently and offered the window and a second staircase as possibilities. "That will work....do you know how to open the window?" They both were able to open the window, and I showed them how to knock out the screen easily. However, I didn't think of the window's height from the ground outside, I saw their worried faces, and from their perspective, it was probably hundreds of feet down. I used this opportunity as another teaching moment as I explained how I was taught how to hang and drop,

which would reduce the drop significantly. Our son seemed ready to try it, while our daughter was not nearly as excited.

Regardless, I reinforced the concept that this is another way, just in case. We moved throughout the second floor and looked at other windows or opportunities for escape to add additional tools to the toolbox. By the end of the drill, I could see the confidence in their faces that they were ready.

As a parent, I felt both pride and comfort knowing that my kids knew what to do in multiple scenarios, including going to a neighbor's house and not returning to the inside of the home if someone didn't get out.

Your anxiety may be high by now, but these small exercises will help survivability and increase confidence, both for you and your family. Knowing or learning what to do before an emergency is fundamental to preparedness. As parents, we







owe it to our family to lead them to success. To be sure, having at least one working smoke detector is a huge step in the right direction. Exercising and testing smoke detectors, changing the batteries, or installing multiple detectors enables time to evacuate before conditions become untenable.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides a plethora of information on fire safety. Their advice is to have at least one smoke detector in your home. Adding this one piece of technology will drastically and statistically increase your survivability. Further, the risk of death in homes with a working smoke detector is reduced by 55% compared with homes with none or an inoperable detector. Moreover, between 2014 and 2018, three out of five home fire deaths were caused by fire in properties with no smoke alarms.

They also provide some other great advice, such as:

- Test all smoke detectors once a month. The kids may enjoy this task!
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall, away from the kitchen.
- Replace smoke detectors that are over ten years old.

It's important to note that most fire & rescue departments across the United States will provide free smoke detector guidance or offer suggestions on where to place it in your home. Simply call your local fire station for details.

Now that our kids are a bit older, there are some things that we could have done better that I would like to share with you. Of course, hindsight is always 20/20, yet sharing thoughts and tips provides you and others the opportunity to have a significant impact on your family's safety today and in the future:

- We never shared our fire evacuation plan with the neighbors. While some neighbors may not be helpful or trustworthy, it remains essential to discuss with them the possibility that members of your family may reach out to them for help.
- We never shared our evacuation or meeting place with visitors, including those that came over for sleepovers. How long would it take to tell them the various ways to get out, or at least the meeting place?
- We never discussed a plan for our dog. For some, pets are their children, and our family is no different. Discuss what the plan is or isn't.
- We didn't consistently reinforce the evacuation routes or practice regularly. Indeed there is no magic number, but once a year should suffice.

In closing, there are a plethora of robust and free resources that you can access to enhance your fire preparedness. I would encourage you and your family to take advantage of these resources. 📌

NFPA Preparedness - [CLICK HERE](#)

United States Fire Administration - [CLICK HERE](#)

Red Cross - [CLICK HERE](#)

Ready - An official US Government website describing various disasters and how to be prepared. This site offers a preparedness kit for fire safety.

## ABOUT JARED GOFF

Jared Goff is a full-time dad and husband. He currently serves as the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, Chief of the Virginia Fire Marshal Academy. Jared just retired from the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department in Northern Virginia as a Captain with over 25 years experience in emergency services, including 10 years in leadership, command, and field training positions. Notably, Jared was the regional Fire-EMS-Health Intelligence Liaison in a local fusion center and was responsible for the collection, analysis, development, and dissemination of intelligence and collaboration with Northern Virginia and National Capital Region stakeholders.

Jared earned his second Master's degree from the Naval Postgraduate School – Center for Homeland Defense and Security where he conducted original research into the challenges that our nation's first responders face when preparing for a Complex Coordinated Attack. In 2013, he earned a Master of Arts in Diplomacy with a concentration in International Terrorism at Norwich University.



# GROWING UP WITH CYBER WALLPAPER

By Sheri Donohue

Children today are not just exposed to technology; it is part of their lives. From the baby monitor and the nanny-cam to the video game consoles, online classes, and hoverboards, it is not just an enhancement to their lives as it was when we first learned about it. Technology is more like wallpaper to them. It is always there in the background and so much a part of their environment that they do not even notice. It's like oxygen, invisible but required.

Very often, when in a waiting room, on an airplane, or on a long car trip, parents will hand their cell phones to their children to keep them busy and quiet. Or, if they planned, they might have a tablet or video game packed and ready. We have all seen the advent of technol-

ogy and have watched its exponential growth. It continues to change the way we work, play, bank, shop, and even obtain healthcare. It makes our lives easier and more efficient. As we experienced over the last year and a half during the pandemic, technology helped us maintain parts of our lives in ways we could not have in earlier generations.

However, it also means that threats to our families are changing. When we were children in the second half of the 20th century, we knew that if we were home, we were safe; safe from bad people who would do us harm. We did not grow up with any dependencies on technology but for the dinner bell perhaps or the street-lights coming on to signal us when it was time to come in for supper. We rode our

bikes in the summer, read books, only had three or four television channels, and used encyclopedias to look up information.

Today, though, four walls and a door are no longer enough to protect our children. The "bad guys," whom our parents warned us about and whom we now worry about hurting our children, use that same technology that has made our lives easier to violate the safety and security of our homes persistently and in most cases, silently.

As parents, we are responsible for paying our bills, keeping our children fed, clothed, healthy, and educated. We plan for our retirement, put money away for college, and make sure we have quality family time. Many of us will find ourselves in that "sandwich generation" in which we



are caring for aging parents as well as our children. With all this on our plates, how can we also be expected to be cybersecurity experts?

## The Many Vocations Of A Parent

As children grow and become independent, we want to encourage curiosity and self-confidence. Unfortunately, overconfidence can be dangerous.

When children learn to walk, they become little wanderers, explorers of their own "new world." At the same time, parents are running to the local hardware store to buy cabinet door locks, electrical outlet plugs, and baby gates for stairs. Why do we do this? While we want our children to become independent and

learn about the world around them, they do not know the dangers of the harsh cleaning chemicals, electric shock from the outlet, or falling down the stairs. But mom and dad do. That does not mean that parents must be chemists, electricians, or carpenters to understand the dangers lurking in otherwise innocuous places in their homes. By the same token, parents need not be cybersecurity experts to protect their children online.

Just as a child will explore their new world when they learn to walk without regard for the dangers they do not understand, they will jump on the internet and explore without understanding the dangers online. It is similar to the feeling we had as children that you are safe at home.

The problem is that growing up with technology, the confidence





and level of comfort that a child has is often much greater than that of a parent. The result is that parents and children erroneously believe that a child knows what they are doing; it really is a digital divide. However, as the responsible adult, parents must understand the basic level of security, just as they know not to drink cleaners, stick a fork in the outlet or roll down the stairs. The cyber equivalent of baby-proofing your home when your toddler starts walking is a combination of technology tools, policies, and education — the same recipe as the cybersecurity program at your office.

“Technology tools” include locking down your internet by changing the password on your router and making sure it is password protected. Ensure you are using anti-virus software on all computers.

“Policies” as they relate to home cybersecurity means regularly updating your anti-virus, operating systems, and software programs to ensure all patching is up to date. Additionally, set parental controls on smart TVs and monitor your child’s activity online, including the information they post on social media and who they have friended. Just as you wouldn’t want your kids hanging out with the wrong crowd, you should also think about those that you may not actually see but with whom there is an online connection.

“Education” is just what it sounds like. Talk with your child about being safe online. Teach them to use strong passwords and not to use the same password for everything. Educate them on what they should not post on social media and what is ok to post. Make sure the conversations are open and honest and that they are comfortable talking with you about their safety and security. You would not tell your child that they are not allowed to drink the cleaning supplies under the sink without telling them why - it could kill them. Similarly, telling your child that they are not allowed to accept friend requests from people they do not know without explaining why will not teach them how to protect themselves later in life when you are no longer in a position to monitor them.

Ideally, you can be reassured that when your child is grown and leaves home, he or she will not be drinking bleach, putting metal objects in the outlet, falling down stairs, or sharing personal information online with someone he does not know.

Be confident in yourself as a parent. You do not need to be an expert in anything to protect your child. Just use common sense, stay informed, and be engaged in your child’s life and all will work out fine. ■

## ABOUT SHERI DONAHUE



Sheri Donahue is an engineer who spent 20 years working for the US Navy. As Program Manager for Security & Intelligence, she managed a portfolio of Intelligence and Intelligence-related projects for the Navy, Department of Defense, and other Intelligence agencies of the US Government fusing science and technology with intelligence to provide knowledge solutions to fight the war on terror.

Sheri is President-Emeritus of the InfraGard National Members Alliance and the Cyber Conflict Studies Association.

Currently, as Co-Founder & CEO of Commonwealth Sentinel Cyber Security Consulting, she works with local governments, small businesses, and non-profits with a mission stating that cybersecurity is for everybody, not just the big corporations.

Sheri received her BS in Industrial Engineering from Purdue University in 1990 and served on the Purdue Engineering Alumni Association Board of Directors. She has been an invited speaker for industry and technology groups on many topics including public-private partnerships, cyber security, and undergraduate and graduate students on creative career planning.



# POSITIVE EFFECTS ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

*By Logan McIntosh*

Sports have always played a critical role in my life, beginning with dance at the age of three, to playing volleyball in college, to continuing to play volleyball as an adult recreationally. I have also had the incredible pleasure of working as a volunteer and as an official coach for dozens of kids throughout my life. As an athlete myself and also as a coach, I have witnessed firsthand the joys and challenges that come from engaging in sports, and the life lessons that I feel are uniquely learned through sports and team activities.

Participation in sports and regular physical activity is essential. Unfortunately, it is on the decline among youth populations in the United States. Its importance cannot be undermined; participation in sports at an early age has significant positive effects on a child's development and can influence that child's future life path. Each child is different in their personality, temperament, coping style, and interests. Nonetheless, all children seek to explore their world through social interaction and building relationships with peers. Engagement in organized sports can satisfy these basic needs in a child. There are proven results demonstrating the benefits of sports on child development. These benefits regarding health, education, and social skills are explained in greater detail below and play a part in the preparedness and resiliency of developing youth and are skills that they will carry with them throughout their lives.

## HEALTH

There is a wealth of physical and mental health benefits from playing in sports for children. Regular physical activity helps build a strong heart, bones, and muscles while helping to prevent chronic diseases and lowering the risk of obesity, diabetes, and

heart disease. Evidence suggests that regular physical activity is associated with a reduced risk of 13 different types of cancer, including breast, colon, liver, and myeloid leukemia. Additionally, participation in sports and regular physical activity improves sleep, and quality sleep is dramatically essential to meet the needs of a growing child's body. A 2009 study found that the average time it took for children to fall asleep was 26 minutes. Those who were active during the day took less time to fall asleep than inactive children; every hour a child was sedentary, the time it took for them to fall asleep increased by 3 minutes. Therefore, a child who sits around most of the day playing video games or watching television will struggle to fall asleep at night and decrease their quality of sleep.

Participation in sports has also been shown to positively affect mental health, such as reinforcing self-esteem, building confidence, and preventing anxiety and depression. A team environment allows children to build a peer network and develop friends that will act as preventative factors in developing mental health problems. A 2019 study reported that when compared with children who exercised for at least an hour a day, children who did not exercise at all were twice as likely to have mental health problems, particularly anxiety and depression.

Sports participation is also a natural method of relieving stress. Those who are less stressed can interact positively with their peers and environment, making regular developmental progress and maintaining relationships and academics. Additionally, children who are less stressed through participation in sports with a stable support network are less likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors and habits such as smoking, drinking alcohol, engaging in delinquent behaviors, and conflicts with others.







## EDUCATION

Sports and physical activity have a significant effect on improved cognitive skills. Research shows that physical activity encourages class attendance and is associated with improved academic achievement, attitudes about academic and classroom behavior, and enhanced concentration and attention. It is also a predictor of future academic success and achievement at the college level. According to research, students who participated in sports were more likely to graduate from a four-year college as well as achieve higher grades. Additionally, a survey of a population of business executives, 94% of whom had previously played a sport, reported that sports participation had contributed to their success in almost two-thirds of the respondents.

Furthermore, sports participation engages tools and skills learned in their formal education and enables them to use these skills in new ways. While our children are memorizing formulas, equations, concepts, and grammar rules, they also are memorizing formations, drills, and techniques through repetition. This encourages healthy habit formation where children can learn reward cycles and delayed gratification, something often present in academic endeavors.

## SOCIAL

Participation in sports is a great way for children to develop their social and interpersonal skills. Inherent in team sports is the camaraderie that develops through working together to achieve a common goal. Skills such as teamwork, patience, leadership, effective communication, respect for authority, sportsmanship, and fairness are foundational for success in life. They are easily developed through a team environment reinforced by strong and caring coaches. These skills are also developed through non-team sports such as tennis, martial arts, swimming, and gymnastics.

Lastly, sports teach children necessary values such as respect for authority, learning to get along with others, sportsmanship, and fairness. Most importantly, sports are a fun way for kids to stay engaged with their peers in their neighborhoods, communities, and schools. The importance of FUN in the activities they choose cannot be stressed enough!

Engagement in sports in adolescence provides numerous benefits to children regarding their health, social lives, and education. Core values and skills are learned through sports participation. They are vital in building their confidence and sense of preparedness and safety, no matter what the situation. Skills like leadership, effective communication, and discipline necessary for preparedness are mirrored in active participation in sports. ■

Sources:

[The Aspen Institute](#)

[American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[Better Health](#)

[Marine Corps Community Services](#)

[Novak Djokovic Foundation](#)

[University of Missouri](#)

[Sportanddev](#)

## ABOUT LOGAN MCINTOSH



Logan McIntosh is a Research Analyst intern for Kiernan Group Holdings. She assists with data collection and analysis, primarily on domestic extremist groups. She graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in Chemistry.

After graduation, she worked at The New Academy Charter School in Pittsburgh, PA as a Certified Pennsylvania Private High School Biology teacher to children in 9th grade. In this extremely rewarding role, she worked as a teacher/counselor to the students, many of whom were delinquent or troubled youth.

After a year at the school, she moved to Arlington, VA and recently graduated with her Master of Arts in Forensic and Legal Psychology degree at Marymount University. She looks to explore a career in intelligence analysis, threat assessment and gun violence, or criminal investigations.

# SUMMER YOUTH ACTIVITIES

By Lauren Krug and Lisa Wielebnicki



Summer is here! Life is getting somewhat back to “normal.” This year has been challenging for everyone, but it’s been especially difficult for us parents. After all, there isn’t a manual on navigating yourself and your family through a pandemic. We’ve had to juggle working, parenting, teaching, and counseling from the inside of our homes. Our children have been on their computers and tablets e-learning and communicating with friends and family more than usual. But the end of the pandemic is near, and it’s about time we take a deep breath and start safely opening our social bubble again. What better time to do this than summer!

Here’s a little bit of background information about us. We’re sisters from Illinois who grew up involved in many different activities, starting from the age of 3. From ballet, soccer, and golf to volunteering at our local Safety Village and attending theatre summer camps,

we’ve tried it all at some point. We both played collegiate volleyball at Division 1 universities, Lauren at Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI, and Lisa at Purdue University in West Lafayette, IN. Lauren is now a mom of two kids, 5 & 3 years old. She is recently a stay-at-home mom who coaches high school-age girls at a local competitive volleyball club. Lisa is a mom of two kids, 3 & 1 years old, with another due in June. She works full time from home for the [Junior Volleyball Association](#) and also coaches at the same volleyball club.

As we can all relate, parents’ schedules are constantly shifting, but we have to remain flexible, often at the drop of a hat. What works for one family might not work for the next, so our schedules and types of activities that we have our children enrolled in may look completely different from each other. Every one of us, however, has just experienced a pandemic

and we’ve all been cooped up and isolated for longer than normal. Whether our children are into math, painting, sports, gardening or science, we can agree that it’s time to get them safely back into their activities while balancing schedules that work for ourselves and our families.

Why get our kids into summer activities? The benefits, especially after a year of isolation, are endless, but here are a few reasons why we should get our kids moving and socializing:

- Improves coordination by developing fine and gross motor skills. Something an IPAD cannot do!
- Combats childhood obesity and helps maintain overall physical health.
- Teaches children how to listen to and work with adults and peers outside of their family and everyday circles. We know our kids listen to others better





than they do us!

- Presents an opportunity for the children to make new friends from different social circles.
- Instills self-confidence, self-awareness and has other positive effects on personal development.
- Provides a mental, emotional, creative, and physical outlet from the pandemic, school, and everyday routines.
- Gives us parents an outlet too. We deserve it!

When we were young, our parents enrolled us in many different summer activities. It was a nice break from the daily grind of school, and we met some of our closest friends, many of whom we still have today, through these activities. These activities also assisted in laying the groundwork that built a foundation for each of our futures. Having our children in different activities is something that we are both very passionate about. We hope that our children will learn the same skills and lessons from their respective activities and benefit from them the way we feel we have. Below is a list of skills that our children can learn from having them in different activities this summer:

- Builds teamwork and leadership skills, which carry over into their school and work environments.
- Teaches the value of hard work.
- Teaches the feeling of accomplishment when they succeed after putting in the hard work.
- Introduces discipline, perseverance, and time management.
- Develops social skills such as empathy, conflict resolution, and how to actively listen to one another.
- Instills a sense of community within our children.
- This is important! Teaches kids how to fail and to hear constructive criticism as well as how to learn from it.

Now you may be wondering where to find youth activities or how to choose the right amount without getting overwhelmed. Every family is different, and maybe only one activity is all you can fit in - That is ok! Do whatever is best for your situation and your child(ren). Here are a few places to look for youth summer activities and volunteer opportunities:



- Local sports clubs (ex. Volleyball, basketball, soccer, gymnastics, etc.)
- Summer camps
- Park districts
- Rec/Community centers
- Local churches
- Golf/tennis clubs
- Middle/High Schools
- Pools

We do not need to overwhelm ourselves anymore this year, but summer activities will get our kids' social lives going again. From experience, not only have our children met new friends and become happier kids, but we have met new parent friends that we enjoy hanging out with and socializing with. Also, nothing is more rewarding than when you see your child's face after they've scored their first goal or after they've swam without their floaties for the first time! 🍷



## ABOUT LAUREN AND LISA

**L**aura Krug (left) graduated from Marquette university with a major in Psychology. She played Division I volleyball while at Marquette, has coached volleyball and continues to coach local competitive volleyball teams. She is currently a stay-at-home mom to two children.

**L**isa Wielebnicki (right) graduated from Purdue University in Retail Management with a minor in Communications and Organizational Leadership & Supervision. Lisa played Division I volleyball at Purdue. She is the mother of two children, coaches competitive volleyball and works full-time as Director of Member Development for the Junior Volleyball Association.

# WALKING THE BLOCK

By Thomas Sivak

## "WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE PREPARED?"

**T**his was a question I asked my eight-year-old son while driving him to swim practice the other day. A true fan of all those who serve our great country, from the Military to the Public Safety community, he looked up to me in the rearview mirror, looks to the left, then to the right, and said, "Dad, of course it is like the United States Coast Guard motto 'Semper Paratus.'" A father's inquisitive thoughts outside of smiling I respond, "Well, what does that mean?" His response, "always ready." Today, a year after a global pandemic began, threats of natural disasters knocked at our door. Yet, our children can still prove that resilience is ever-present as long as we take a moment and recognize it.

Our kids watch us constantly, seemingly our every move. They listen to conversations, "hear" the constant churn of news cycles, and gather information online. As parents, we begin teaching even before kids start walking. That teaching never stops: telling them not to talk to strangers, to look both ways when they cross the street, and to tell us where they are going, which teach and inform the action plans for any emergency. As they start school and become a bit more independent, our risk aperture grows as we try to help them understand other world dangers.

As parents, we learn the neighborhood, who lives next door, and who to go to if there is an emergency. Then, inherently, we start building skills for children to create plans, even if those plans are in their heads. These are all opportunities to build skills that will last a lifetime, especially related to preparedness and having a plan if there is a situation our children might face. My eight-year-old elaborated in another conversation that plans are action items telling us what to do if something happens or a disaster strikes. From going to the basement during a tornado warning to knowing what to do when the power goes out, our children at a young age will know what to do as long as we talk about it ahead of time.

When a tornado hit Jackson, Mississippi, my teenage niece and nephew knew exactly what to do. They moved to the home's interior to be safe and then checked in to ensure the family knew they were safe. This made a world of difference. As we raise the next generation, there are three opportunities to better prepare our children. These include understanding risk, building action plans, and engaging in conversation about what to do when something happens.

To understand risks, we need first to outline what it is and then discuss the degrees of differences in a developmentally appropriate way so children find it easy to understand and apply. For example, we need to discuss knowing the immediate risk of crossing the street without looking both ways, as well as the broader risks in traveling across the city, country, and world, un-







accompanied by a parent or a teacher, knowing we have instilled the right kind of decision-making and choices. Building an understanding of risk will help develop their confidence. With that knowledge, we are helping our children to be invested in their own safety and security, which they will never outgrow.

From discussions about and understanding risk, we can then move into action planning by giving with examples and offering practical application. We need to help them ask questions about what choices are available and how to make the best one based on what is happening at the time. Action plans start as conversations and can evolve into building written family plans related to preparedness.

Lastly, engaging our children in discussions about “what if” scenarios is exactly the opportunity for them to articulate precisely what to do when something happens and have the confidence to communicate and ask for help when they need it. Weather in the midwest offers us many snow, heat, tornados, and flooding scenarios to discuss. We also make sure to discuss and plan for emergencies and critical incidents that are not weather-related, such as getting separated from a parent or trusted adult in an unfamiliar place or unpredictable violence.

So while you walk the block today or tomorrow, the opportunities exist to ask your children what they see as risk, what they would do if they have to make a quick decision, and why they would make those choices.. All these trips and discussions are really building a file drawer full of options for a more prepared and resilient young but future global citizen. We are giving our children an opportunity to look at life a little differently and empower them to be the motto of the United States Coast Guard *Semper Paratus*, “Always Ready.” 🍷

## ABOUT THOMAS SIVAK, CEM



Tom Sivak is the Vice President of Safety, Security and Emergency Management for Cresco Labs. In his current role he is focused on assessing risk related to human caused, natural, and technological disasters while establishing a comprehensive emergency management program focused on a culture of prevention, protection and preparedness.

Previously Tom served as the Deputy Director of Emergency Management for the city of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications. In this role, he was primarily responsible for the comprehensive emergency planning portfolio and consequence management plans for special events. In addition, Tom's duties included oversight of the City's 24/7 Operations Center (OC), Emergency Operations Center (EOC), emergency management duty activations, and emergency management/homeland security capability enhancements and projects. During his tenure with the city of Chicago, Tom has led EOC activations for large-scale annual events including the Chicago Marathon, Chicago Pride Parade, the 2015 Chicago Blackhawks Stanley Cup clinch game and victory parade and 2016 Cubs World Series and victory parade. In 2017, he served as a lead coordinator for the repatriation of hurricane evacuees from the island of St. Martin. He led coordinated recovery efforts for evacuees from Puerto Rico. Tom has also been involved in major activations as a result of the 2018 Mercy Hospital Active Shooter Incident and 2019 historic cold weather affecting the City of Chicago. Most recently he served as the Emergency Operations Center Incident Commander for the City of Chicago Covid-19 response to include building of partnerships and logistics for the vaccine mission. Served as Incident Commander of the EOC for Civil Unrest in May 2020, August 2020, and Presidential Election events in 2020 to include authoring the City of Chicago Election 2020 Consequence Management Plan.

Prior to joining the City of Chicago, Tom was the Executive Director for the Hamilton County Emergency Management Division in Indiana. He served as the Planning Section Chief for the Indianapolis Division of Homeland Security where he was a lead Planner for the 2011 Super Bowl XLVI Incident Management Team and was involved in preparations for special events surrounding the 2011 Indianapolis 500. He also led recovery efforts during the Enbridge oil spill, Henryville F-4 tornado, Indiana State Fair Sugarland stage collapse and the Indianapolis house explosion in Richmond Hill, Indiana. During his time in Indiana, Tom earned the certification of Tactical Information Specialist for the Indiana Task Force 1 Urban Search and Rescue Planning. Task Force 1 is comprised of emergency responders from Fire Departments and civilians in specialized emergency disciplines in and around Marion County, Indiana.

Tom's early career in emergency management began in southwest Michigan where he served as the Director of Emergency Services for the American Red Cross, Deputy Bio-terrorism Coordinator for the Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies, and as a Regional Security Planner for Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department. In addition to Tom's emergency management experience in Kalamazoo, he also served as a volunteer firefighter with the Oshtemo Township Fire Department.

He is a Certified Emergency Manager with the International Association of Emergency Managers

Tom's interest in emergency services began when he was a teenager in high school as a volunteer firefighter for the city of DeWitt, New York.

A native of East Cleveland, Ohio, Tom earned a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology from Marquette University in Milwaukee and holds a Master's Degree of Science in Public Service Management from DePaul University in Chicago.

# 55 THINGS

## *ALL Parents and Grandparents Should Know About The Internet And Commercial Exploitation.* BY Dottie Laster and Christian Nandry, Ph.D

I have worked on the issue of human trafficking in the United States for the past 18 years. It is unfortunate the unique skills I have obtained are needed every day; including holidays and weekends. Through my experiences I have found many patterns and identifiers of possible “luring” and “grooming” activities used by traffickers to lure unsuspecting children, teenagers, and adults. I would like to share my experiences with you to enhance parents’ ability to identify signs of potential human trafficking, and therefore combat this epidemic.

I have compiled a list of 55 things that will help parents become better equipped to raise their children in this age of interactive internet devices. Please use the image links to download the additional resources.

### 1. Digital DNA 1.5

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

### 2. 55 Human Trafficking Awareness Tips

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

### 3. Recognizing the Early Stages of Sex Trafficking Reference Guide

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)

From the co-author: I met Dottie Laster through a law enforcement contact I know in the greater San Antonio area. Dottie Laster has an unparalleled reputation from the human trafficking and law enforcement community; from local, state, and federal law enforcement officers. When I met Dottie, I was truly taken aback by her boundless and intimate knowledge of human trafficking, and her truly empathetic desire to assist this fight any way that she can. In the process of our meeting, I discovered we both shared a deep desire to root out human traffickers and expose them to the light. It is my hope the information shared in this release can assist in this endeavor.

Christian Nandry, Ph.D

### ABOUT DOTTIE LASTER

Dottie Laster is an expert on the issue of human trafficking. In 2005, Dottie triggered the largest rescue of human trafficking victims in the United States. Her work has been featured in many documentaries such as Vanity Fair Confidential on Discovery Investigates, The Long Island Serial Killer on CBS, and Sex Slaves: Texas Rescue on MSNBC. She was trained by the Department of Justice to train law enforcement and others on the issue of human trafficking.

She holds a Master of Arts in International Relations from St. Mary's University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She serves an expert witness, public speaker and consultant on human trafficking in the United States.





# Until Next Time

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Summertime usually generates thoughts of excitement as children and families begin to see their daydreams of relief from the hustle and bustle of work and school come into reality. Families begin to plan vacations, and new routines are created, including extra family time and carefree adventures. For others, however, summertime causes anxiety, fear... and even paranoia.

As parents, we would like to believe that we are prepared to take on any of our children's challenges even as they grow older and gain more independence.

Unfortunately, the realities of life are not without the need for preparation. For example, children are never under our continuous supervision; summer exacerbates this. Situations like shared custody where your child may be gone for the duration of the season, summer camps where your child may be off in the wilderness for weeks on end, or the simple independence of your teen riding

their bike or skateboard from sunrise to sunset are all examples of this.

PREPAREDNESS WITHOUT PARANOIA \* reminds parents and communities that these are shared realities. We can lessen our fears and anxieties knowing that there is a collective effort to provide safety and security for our children when they are out of sight. Of course, we should still enjoy the well-deserved break. But first, we must proactively educate ourselves to respond to situations where a child's safety is in jeopardy. Then, should the need come, there is no hesitation.

Summertime is a season to be enjoyed without anxiety. I leave you with the best advice to date. Live in the sunshine. Swim the sea. Drink the wild air. - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Enjoy your summer break, but more importantly, enjoy the time you have with your family, friends, and community. After all, there is no other season that fosters community engagement like summer.

**Deaneé Johnson, PhD**

Chair, Advisory Board

[PWPORG.ORG](http://PWPORG.ORG)



# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

PWPORG.ORG

HELPFUL  
RESOURCES

Helpful  
RESOURCES

ON AWARENESS  
AND PREPAREDNESS

SPECIALLY  
CURATED

For Parents

BY PARENTS





## *The Parents With Preparedness* Resource Guide

### INTRODUCTION

The following resource guide has been specially curated for you and your family. It is full of useful links to help you stay informed, safe, and prepared.

## Updated Covid Guidelines

When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others

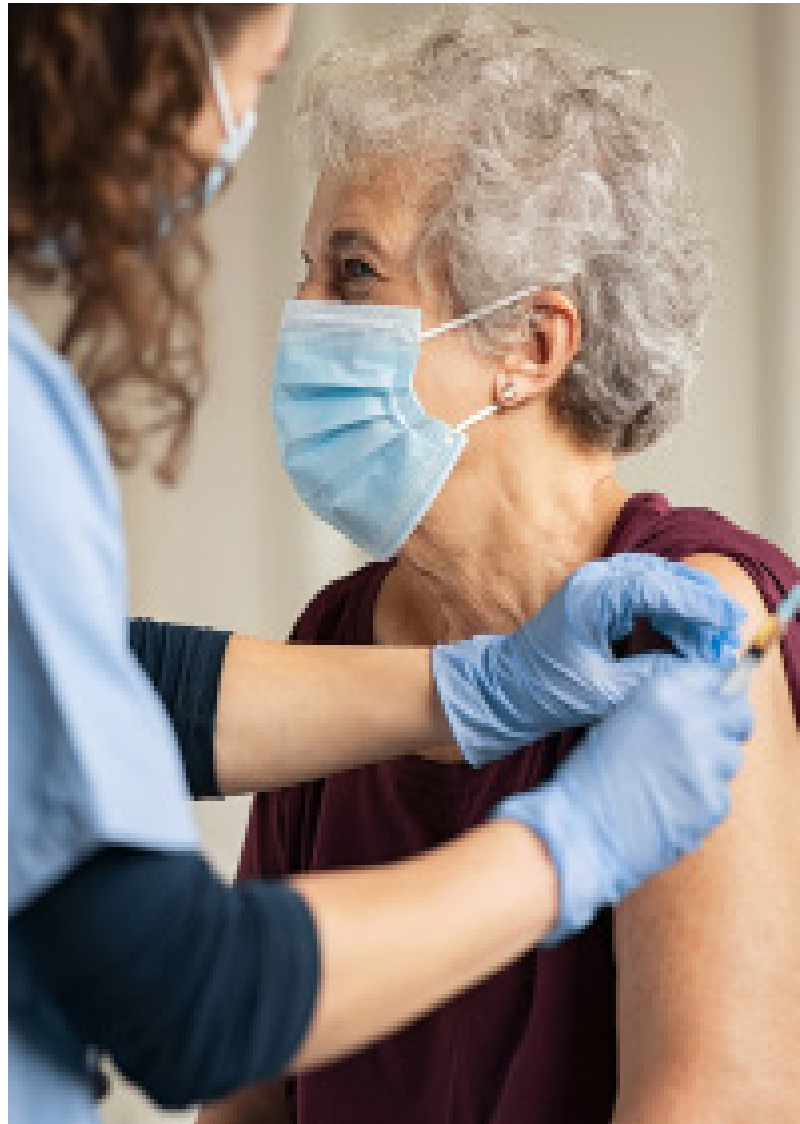
[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Daily Activities and Going Out

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)



# Summer Learning

Summer Learning and Beyond: Opportunities for Creating Equity

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Summer Learning Collection

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Summer learning loss: What is it, and what can we do about it?

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

How Can We Use Summer to Keep Students Learning?

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)







# PYROTECHNIC SAFETY

Firework Safety  
[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

American Pyrotechnic Association  
Kids Video on Sparklers Safety  
[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Firework Safety Infographic  
[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Treating and Preventing Burns -  
When to Seek Care  
[LEARN MORE HERE](#)





# *Safety* AT THE SHORE

Beach and Ocean Safety

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

USLA's Coloring Book PDF for Kids for a Day at the Beach

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

A Lifeguard's Beach Safety Beach

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Sun Safety

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Heat Safety Tips and Resources

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

Animal Stings and Bites (jellyfish, shark)

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How to Teach Your Kids What to Do If They Get Lost

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Water Safety for Families with Children with Special Needs

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5 Water Safety Resources for Children with Special Needs

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# Summer Physical Wellness



Warning Signs and Symptoms of Heat - Related Illnesses  
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Summer Sports in the Heat Tips  
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Common Overuse Injuries  
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Preventing Overuse Injuries  
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Family-Centered Fitness  
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Summer Activities to Promote Cognitive Development  
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# Domestic Violence Resources

What MiliThe National Domestic Violence Hotline  
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National Domestic Violence Hotline Fact Sheet  
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Resources for Victim Survivors  
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Create a Safety Plan  
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Domestic Violence Services  
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# CAMPING SAFETY



Camping: Staying Safe  
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Two Ways to Purify Water  
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If You Get Lost  
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Bear Safety for Families  
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Kids and Bear Safety: Be Prepared  
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# Fire Safety

Keeping Kids Safe From Fire  
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Let's Have Fun with Fire Safety  
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Summer Fire Safety Tips  
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Smokey for Kids  
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Electrical Safety International Kid's Corner  
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## Summer Cyber Safety (Hygiene)

Internet Safety Guide for Kids  
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#Screensafe in Summer: Hot tips for Summer Surfing  
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Privacy and Identity Theft Advice Hub  
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Talking to your Child About Online Safety  
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Five Tips to Keep Your Kids Safe Online this Summer  
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How2Inform Social Media links  
[Tik Tok - CLICK HERE](#)  
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[Youtube CLICK HERE](#)



# Special Technology Concerns

The Vaccine Passport  
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RFID blocking: What is it and do you really need it?  
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Recommended Preparedness Apps by the Experts  
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The Dangers of Oversharing on Social Media.  
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Essential Home Safety Tips While on Vacation  
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# SUMMER CAMP SAFETY



Suggestions for Youth and Summer Camps

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Summer Camp Safety Tips

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What to Look For in a Summer Camp During COVID-19

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Keeping Kids Safe at Summer Camp

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# Pet Safety During the Summer



Hot Weather Safety Tips  
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Keep Pets Safe in the Heat  
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Fireworks: Awesome for Humans, Terrifying for Animals  
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## Summer Angels: Nannies/Babysitters/Child Care

Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care  
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Care in your Own Home  
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A Child in My Classroom is Showing Signs of COVID-19: What Do I Do?  
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Health and Safety in Childcare  
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Ensuring Safe and Healthy Child Care  
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Ensuring Safety and Care for Children with Functional Needs  
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# FINANCIAL

## Financial Resources

Financial Health During Covid-19

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Avoiding Financial Fraud

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6 Tips for Parents Looking to Improve Financial Literacy for Kids

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Financial Fraud Checklist

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Financial Literacy for Kids Category – Ages 4-8

Financial Literacy for Kids

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Teaching Kids About Money, Ages 3-4

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Teaching Financial Literacy, Ages 5-7

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Financial Literacy for Kids, Ages 8-10

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Teaching Kids About Money: An Age-by-Age Guide

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15 Ways to Teach Kids About Money

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A photograph of three people—two women and one man—collaborating in a professional setting. They are gathered around a table, looking at a laptop. The woman on the left is a Black woman with her hair in a high ponytail, wearing a light-colored blazer. The woman in the center is a white woman with blonde hair, wearing a tan blazer over a black top. The man on the right is a white man with a beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt. They are all looking intently at the laptop screen. In the background, there are white shelves with various books and documents.

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# PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

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