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AUGUST 2024
VOLUME 31 NO. 10

NORTH STATE
Parent

**Dog Days
Of Summer**

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Directory**

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- Heavy sweating
- Headache
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness/dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting



What to do:

- Move to a cool place
- Loosen clothes
- Sip water
- Cool down with cold cloths or bath

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- Rapid heart beat
- Confusion
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On the Cover: Chloe Scott, age 10, enjoys swimming and is an enthusiastic member of the South Siskiyou Swim Team. She loves animals and being outdoors.

Photo by: Rachel Scott

- 6 BE THE CHANGE**
Jeff Capps: Feeding Needs and Planting Seeds for a Better Tomorrow
By Brianna Lee Keaney
- 8 Community College May Be the Best Choice**
By Pam Molnar
- 10 UNIQUELY US**
Fostering a More Inclusive Community: Special Olympics of Northern California
By Jennifer Arnold
- 11 Childcare & Preschool Directory**
- 12 SISKIYOU COUNTY NEWS**
Swap Screen Time for Tree Time on the New Gateway II Trail System
By Stacey Leigh Mohr
- 14 Stay Connected to Nature in The New School Year**
By Sandi Schwartz
- 16 THIS IS TEHAMA**
Celebrating Native American Culture Youth Style with Supaman September 7
By Kate Hiller
- 22 Let's Get Physical: The Benefits of Biking in the North State**
By Brianna Lee Keaney
- 24 Easy, Healthy School Lunches Kids Will Love**
By Heidi Haskins

DEAR READERS

I hope you and your family have had a wonderful summer filled with joy and fun! One of my favorite things about publishing North State Parent has been meeting you, our readers, at great summer events.

We'll be at several more exciting events in August and September and hope to meet you and your family. These events are always lots of fun, and a wonderful way for us to learn — in person — what you want to see in the pages of North State Parent.

Be sure to note these fun events on your own family calendar.

- Mt. Shasta Concert Series, August, 4 & 11, 6:30pm. Shastice Park.
- Enloe's Mothers Stroll, Saturday, August 3, 10am-12pm, Enloe Conference Center, Chico. Parking available both to the side and back of the building.
- Mr. Rogers Day, Saturday, September 28, time TBD, (check our [Community Calendar](#) for updates), Anderson River Park, Anderson.
- The Mt. Shasta Blackberry Festival, Sept 1, 12-6pm, Shastice Park, Mt. Shasta.

Hearing from you is powerful, so when you shop at local businesses and use services you've seen advertised in our pages, be sure to let them know — "I saw you in North State Parent!" This helps us grow and is a wonderful way to support us in our journey as we support children, family and community throughout the North State.

Best wishes,

Pamela

and the North State Parent magazine team



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OUR SUPPORTIVE DISPLAY ADVERTISERS

About Trees 17	Empower Tehama 17	North Valley Tree Service 27	Shasta Head Start 27
Achieve Charter Schools..... 18	Evergreen Union School Institute of Excellence 19	Northern Summit Academy 19	Shasta View Academy 20
Anderson New Technology High School 18	Far Northern Regional Center 3	Northern United Charter Schools..... 20	Sherwood Montessori 20
Bella Art Works 13	Forest Ranch Charter School 19	Northern Valley Indian Health..... 9	Shop 'N Kart 25
Blue Oak Charter School 18, 25	Golden Eagle Charter School 19	Paradise Adventist Elementary School 7	Success One Charter High School 20
Bricks & Minifigs 27	Hometech Charter School 19	Philip York 5	Tehama e-Learning Academy 21
Butte County Office Of Education .. 3, 5	Hope Academy for Personalized Learning 7	Phoenix Charter Academy 20	Turtle Bay Exploration Park 28
California Heritage Youth Build Academy..... 18	Inspire School of Arts and Sciences ... 19	Pivot Charter North Valley 20	United Way of Northern California..... 2
Cedar Grove School 13	Kevin Shearer, DDS 13	Redding Ballet Theatre 5	Valene L. Smith Museum of Anthropology..... 23
Chico Country Day School..... 18	Kindred Hearts 15	Redding Christian School 7	Walden Academy..... 21
Core Butte Charter School 18	Kinetics Academy of Dance 15	Redding School Of The Arts..... 20	West Redding Preschool..... 27
Cottonwood Creek Charter School ... 18	Lassen Volcanic Academy 19	Ridgeline Pediatric Respite Services 9	When Pie Meets Bread..... 15
Creekside Counseling 23	Lincoln Street School 19	Shasta Charter Academy 20	Wildflower Open Classroom..... 21

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

REDDING Ballet THEATRE
Diana Christensen, Artistic Director

THE NUTCRACKER

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Redding, CA 96001



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Jeff Capps and Dunsmuir High culinary arts students, winners of Celebrity Chef Award at the Cook Around The World competition at Walt Disney World in Florida, pose with renowned celebrity Chef Jet Tila and Mickey.



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JEFF CAPPS

FEEDING NEEDS AND PLANTING SEEDS FOR A BETTER TOMORROW



Jeff Capps and Chef Jet Tila.

“In my mind, being a father and teacher is why I was put on this earth,” says Jeff Capps, culinary arts instructor at Dunsmuir High. “It is not what I have to do, it is what I choose to do. It is what is most important to me when it comes to departing this earth; to be able to leave behind the knowledge and the values that were instilled in me by our ancestors.”

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

He started out here in the North State as a child of modest means. “We were not rolling in dough (pun intended), but my mom and dad would take us to dinner when they were able,” Jeff says. “We would have a great time together and enjoy a meal as a family – without having to do the dishes. A bonus!”

These early excursions left a lasting impact. Jeff wanted to provide that same experience to other families, which led him to Western Culinary Institute in Portland, Oregon. It wasn’t all smooth sailing, though. His father died just 10 days before graduation. However, his parents had always modeled an unrelenting tenacity that inspired him to push through the heartbreak. As Jeff says, “Always chase your dreams; they won’t chase you.”

HOMECOMING, HONING HIS SKILL SET AND FINDING FOOTING ON FAMILIAR SOIL

After graduating with honors, Jeff opened his first restaurant. He met and married a woman from his hometown of Yreka, and moved back to the North State, bringing his entrepreneurial spirit with him.

Jeff met his goal of providing that family dining experience on his home turf with a West-Mex restaurant in Montague. Tireless, Jeff created two more restaurants, a catering business and a product for a chain of supermarkets. He even consulted on, as he puts it, “at least two dozen other restaurants for other folks just as crazy as I was.”

7 ▶

He's spent 25 years working in various aspects of the culinary business and from the beginning he was sharing what wisdom he had gained with employees and co-workers. "They taught me new tricks as well," he says with an affable humility.

JEFF'S BIG SWITCH FROM THE RESTAURANT GAME TO TEACHING

Jeff had always loved nurturing inquisitive minds; and having weekends and summers free was ideal for the devoted father. Between two marriages, fostering and adoption, he's been blessed with his own handful of wonderful kids ranging from 11 to 37. But 60-80-hour work weeks are an industry norm when running a restaurant, leaving little time for family.

When Siskiyou County's director of career technical education reached out to Jeff, he jumped at the chance to be able to do what he loves while working a more family-friendly schedule. Being enthusiastic about both cooking and enriching young minds made heading the culinary arts program at Dunsmuir High School an easy choice. "Being able to be home for my family was the best move I ever made," he says. "Besides being more available for my own kids, I had 60+ kids at work to take care of. Perfect for me."

In these last 11 years in the school system, he's helped students find the confidence to crush it in the kitchen. They develop the skills to handle not only adulthood, but myriad careers in the culinary field. In fact, when we last checked in with Jeff, he was preparing a handful of students for the Cook Around the World competition in Florida. The team went up against 85 other high schools and they won the Celebrity Chef Award from chef Jet Tila. "It was an incredible honor," says Jeff.

FINDING WAYS TO GIVE BACK BEYOND TEACHING

This do-it-all dad has coached softball, baseball and even remains a 4H leader for cooking. Being a force for good in his family and community is important to the 58-year-old educator. But these are not his only extracurriculars.

Schools were closed during the height of the pandemic, but Jeff understood that children still needed to eat. Social distancing provided challenges, so this single father brought the only people he could be around: his kids. Together, they prepared food in the school kitchen and served breakfasts and lunches through a side door at Dunsmuir High to anyone 18 and under.

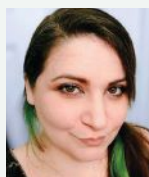
Serving the community and not just the school, Jeff went from making 80 meals per day to around 240. Twice a week, they'd distribute six meals per child so no kid would go hungry. "It was awesome to be able to keep in touch with our students that year and a half, even if it was for a few moments and with our masks on. Crazy times."

But the craziness didn't end when school started up again. "Soon after the COVID nightmare calmed down, it was apparent to me that we have a great deal of food insecurities everywhere, not just in our neck of the woods. I started sending leftover food home daily for some, just on weekends for others and knew we needed to do more," Jeff says.

Jeff started a food pantry at the high school, with his own donations and those from staff. The county contributed backpacks the kids could use when "shopping," to avoid the shame that often comes with food insecurity. And he's even had food boxes delivered over breaks for those in precarious circumstances, so no one goes without.

"I remind the staff and myself that if you are hungry, one of our most basic needs, you cannot think of much else except where your next meal is coming from," Jeff says. They provide two breakfasts (for early birds and latecomers), lunch, afterschool snacks and all-day healthy snacks, preventing the crashes that may come with adolescent metabolisms. "Fulfilling a basic need is both gratifying and humbling at the same time. It's why I enjoy my job so much."

And Jeff isn't slowing down. He says, "Moving forward, I would like to institute more ways to feed more people. It's what I do and what makes me feel connected." Between teaching, fatherhood and outreach, Jeff is constantly showing what a driven dreamer can accomplish with a generous helping of determination and an open heart. ■



Brianna Lee Keaney is a parent and California native with a passion for community service, education, the arts and equality. When not writing articles, Bri can be found tending an ever-growing mini zoo of rescues, creating things, tutoring and fighting the good fight.

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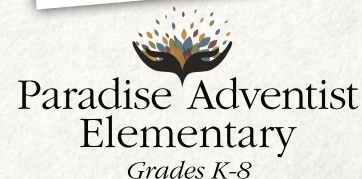
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COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAY BE THE BEST CHOICE

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Many people who are considering obtaining a college degree overlook the benefits of attending a community college, perhaps incorrectly assuming that it is just for those who can't get into to a four-year university. The truth is that community colleges can be the perfect fit for a high school student, graduate or returning adult looking for a career boost or change. Here's why community colleges deserve to be included on your college consideration list.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS AFFORDABLE

Locally, community college tuition for in-state, full-time students averages between \$1,200 and \$1,400 a year, not including books, room and board. If we want to compare apples to apples, the cost of tuition and fees in a public four-year college in the North State region averages between \$5,000 and \$15,000 per year, making community college less than a third of the cost of a four-year college.

In California, many community colleges are free or extremely low-cost for local high school graduates. Shasta College offers two years of free tuition for any full-time student. Students can also attend tuition-free while they are in high school, jump-starting their college education while keeping costs down. "My son did summers at Shasta College, and took dual enrolled classes during his high school term which counted toward his high school classes for graduation and gave him college credits," says Peter Griggs, director of marketing, communications and public relations at Shasta College. "He ultimately went to Shasta College for one year, transferred to Sacramento State University and graduated with a BS in a STEM field with two minors – in three years total of college."

SMALLER CLASS SIZES, HANDS-ON LEARNING, FUTURE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Not everyone is successful in a large auditorium-like setting. Community colleges have smaller class sizes and allow for more hands-on learning experiences and better relationships with professors. In addition, many night classes are taught by professionals in their field versus a professor who has not been in the field for several years. These adjunct professors are also helpful in opening doors for future employment. Many community colleges offer career and internship placement services for students for the local market.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE OPTIONS

It's hard to know what you want to do with the rest of your life at 18 or to juggle the demands of work and family if you're a returning student. Community college allows a student to try different introductory classes without paying room and board and all the expense of entering a four-year university. With smaller departments, students at community colleges may have the opportunity to shadow another student or take advantage of internship opportunities for career technical classes, to see if that field of study is really what they want to do.

CLOSE TO HOME AND EASY TRANSITION TO COLLEGE LIFE

Community colleges are closer to home, which means less commuting time and no extra room and board. It can be an easier transition for those students who need a little more time to adjust to post-high school life and are not ready to move away from home yet. Community colleges also offer a wealth of support services for all students to help them achieve their educational goals.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES OFFER FLEXIBILITY TO MEET LIFE'S CHALLENGES

The class times at a community college are offered during the day or at night, with many online, in-person and hybrid classes for maximum flexibility, giving the student the ability to work a full-time job or tend to other responsibilities. Some community colleges offer off-site classes in local libraries or other campus satellite sites, so students don't have to drive to the main campus.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES OFFER PLENTY OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Community colleges have many of the groups you will find at a four-year college – athletics, theater, honors societies, clubs, leadership opportunities and travel to study abroad. When compared to the tens of thousands of students in larger four-year colleges, community colleges have less competition to fill these positions. 9 ►



Community College can be an affordable gateway to early graduation and a successful career.

GATEWAY TO A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY

Community college is a great solution for students who want to focus on boosting their incoming GPA on a four-year university transfer.

An ADT (Associate Degree for Transfer), an excellent option available from California community colleges, is a two-year associate degree that is fully transferable to a California State University (CSU). Sometimes called a Degree with a Guarantee, it is no more than 60 semester units. Students who meet the CSU's minimum eligibility requirements are guaranteed admission to a CSU campus. Alternatively, community college students can complete TAG (Transfer Admission Guarantee) agreements that guarantee admission to many University of California (UC) campuses upon completion of the agreement, which includes requirements for GPA and completing qualifying classes.

Over 30 bachelor's degree programs are available within the California Community College System (CCC). Twenty-nine percent of University of California and 51 percent of California State University graduates started at a California community college.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED SCHOLARSHIPS

Community college means community involvement. Many local businesses offer scholarships or internships to students at the college in their community with the hopes of recruiting some of these students to work for them in the future. Transfer scholarships are also available to students who choose to go to four-year colleges after graduation.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE MIGHT BE ALL YOU NEED

Over 200 career technical programs throughout the CCC system offer a certificate requiring as short as a semester's worth of study up to a two-year community college degree, so attending a four-year university is not the only road to success. Students are often hired right out of these programs, called CTE (career technical education) – even before they graduate. According to the California Community Chancellor's website, there are at least



15,000 jobs with starting salaries of \$40K and up that can be obtained with a two-year degree.

Currently, 45 percent of Butte College graduates will earn more than \$54,000 per year after five years in the workforce with only an associate degree. A quarter of those graduates go on to make over \$70,000 per year.

With all that area community colleges offer, it's worth exploring college and career preparation opportunities available to your high school student at your local community college well before graduation or to returning students looking to change careers or upgrade skills and certifications affordably and rapidly. ■



Pam Molnar is a freelance writer and mother of three who is a proud graduate of a community college.

NORTH STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGES

- Butte College butte.edu
- College of the Siskiyous siskiyous.edu
- Feather River College frc.edu
- Lassen College lassencollege.edu
- Shasta College shastacollege.edu
- Yuba City College yc.yccd.edu

NOTABLE GRADUATES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE

- Halle Berry, actor - Cuyahoga Community College
- John & Jim Belushi, actors – College of DuPage
- Eileen Collins, astronaut – Corning Community College
- Guy Fieri, Food Network host – American River College
- Morgan Freeman, actor – LA City College
- Tom Hanks, actor - Chabot College
- Steve Jobs, co-founder and CEO Apple – Reed College
- George Lucas, filmmaker – Modesto Jr. College
- Jackie Robinson, MLB Star – Pasadena City College
- Aaron Rodgers, NFL Star – Butte College
- Arnold Schwarzenegger, former governor of California – Santa Monica College
- Amy Tan, author – San Jose City College

NOTABLE SHASTA COLLEGE GRADUATES

- Jason Sehorn, (NFL NY Giants, St. Louis Rams)
- Ken Shamrock, UFC
- Ricky Ray (CFL for Argonauts and Edmonton Eskimos)
- Easton Waterman (Miami Marlins)
- Leon Donohue coach
- Sydney Mancasola (opera) and Rafael Helbig-Kostka (opera)
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{ UNIQUELY US }
REFLECTIONS OF A
SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT
BY JENNIFER ARNOLD



Fostering a More Inclusive Community: Special Olympics of Northern California

The Special Olympics, founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968, is an organization that serves millions of athletes in over 190 countries, promoting inclusivity, empowerment and community engagement. Here in the North State, the Special Olympics of Northern California (SONC) continues this legacy by offering a diverse range of sports and events tailored to the abilities and interests of athletes in our region. Along with the sports programs, SONC encourages overall wellness by distributing information and resources on preventative care and maintaining healthy habits.

Stephen Bell, the area director for the Shasta County chapter of SONC, became involved with the Special Olympics three years ago when looking for wellness-focused programs for his son, Bradley. "I wanted to focus on his health and get him out more into the community and society and the Special Olympics provided the forum for both of those," he says. What they found was not just a sports program but a supportive community that has allowed Bradley and his fellow athletes to grow their skills, build lasting friendships and be accepted for who they are.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS PARTICIPANTS ARE THRIVING AND BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Christine Walls, Jim Putnam and Kristen Gibson all have adult children who have been involved with Special Olympics for several years and they all share the same sentiment that the program is an amazing outlet for their kids. "It fills my bucket," Jim says about participating in SONC with his daughter Laura. "It's so much fun, and it's so rewarding to see new athletes improve in their skills."

Isolation is always a risk for families and caregivers of children with disabilities, but Christine and Kristin both described building strong connections with other families while being involved with SONC. Christine says she and her son Ashton "have met a lot of great people" along the way who have become like family. Kristin explained how SONC has allowed her to meet other families that have children or loved ones with Down syndrome, like her son, Logan, and "connect with others who are going through the same issues."

Many athletes involved with SONC are residents of local group homes for disabled adults. Darlene Emerton, owner of Aaron's Home in Redding, says the program is an excellent way for her residents to stay physically active. She also emphasizes that Special Olympics takes athletes of all abilities. "Even if they've never played before, they can learn. They just come in and practice skills," she says.

SPREADING INCLUSION THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

Stephen says one of his primary goals for the program is "to get back out into the community." He's working on partnering with local schools and businesses to encourage and facilitate inclusion "because not only are we asking for the support, but we want to support our community as well," he remarked.

SONC puts on several successful fundraisers every year and Stephen says they have had a "great reception from the community wanting to help." He is grateful to Anderson Union High School district and organizations like the Elks Lodge for allowing them to use their space for basketball and bocce tournaments. Spring and summer events like the Pro-Am Golf Tournament and the Law Enforcement Torch Run have also received a great response from the community.

More recently, SONC has partnered with Shasta College to hold softball practice on their field, with plans to add more sports and activities on the campus. "We're hoping to be fully incorporated and immersed in Shasta College by 2025 and doing wonderful things," says Stephen.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS

SONC accepts athletes ages eight and up and there is no cost to participate. They offer different sports programs throughout the year, including basketball, golf, bocce, bowling and softball. The program is also actively seeking volunteers. For more information or to get involved, visit Special Olympics in Northern California at sonc.org and look for your area program. ■



Shasta County author Jennifer Arnold is the mom of four, two of whom have been diagnosed with multiple special needs. She hopes to raise awareness of many issues that parents of special needs children face on a regular basis.



Athletes of all abilities enjoy the feeling of accomplishment and build their skills through participation in Special Olympics of Northern California.



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West Redding Preschool. Photo by Tracey Hedge

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shastaheadstart.org

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Shasta Head Start is a private, non-profit corporation which was formed in 1965 to provide high quality childcare and social services to low-income children and their families in Shasta, Siskiyou and Trinity Counties. Lic# 455406084

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www.reddingtlic.org crystal@reddingtlic.org

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SISKIYOU COUNTY NEWS

Swap Screen Time for Tree Time on the New Gateway II Trail System

We are fortunate in this region to have access to the Gateway Trail network, a system of multi-use professionally designed and environmentally sustainable trails adjacent to the community of Mount Shasta. Open for hikers, joggers, mountain bikers and equestrians, these trails provide pathways to stunning views, plenty of shade and a truly inspiring connection with the natural beauty of our volcanic region.

MOUNT SHASTA TRAIL ASSOCIATION BREAKS NEW TRAILS

The Mount Shasta Trail Association (MSTA), a group of local hikers and mountain bikers dedicated to providing access to the scenic beauty of the Mount Shasta wilderness while preserving its natural beauty, is 32 miles into the remarkable project of adding 46 miles of trails to the Gateway Trail network, with trails for every hiking and biking ability winding throughout this picturesque region.

The group's mission is to connect people to nature by designing, constructing and maintaining trails in the Mount Shasta area. "Our desire is to get people and especially kids, off their electronic devices and out doing something in nature, in the trees, on the trails, at lakes and rivers," says John Harch, MSTA president.

MSTA spent \$110K 12 years ago to rebuild some informal trails behind Mount Shasta High School, make them erosion resistant and get them accepted by the Forest Service as formal trails. These 10.7 miles of trails were called Gateway I. "Then we said 'Hey, can we build a whole bunch more?'" John says. "So we conceived the plan called Gateway II to build 46 miles of trails."

THE MIRACLE OF THE GATEWAY II TRAIL SYSTEM

"I thought 'we'll never get the money; we'll never pull this all together and get the environmental report work done'," John says. But after almost five years, (three of which were spent just on the environmental assessment before they put a shovel in the ground), and \$2 million, much of the funding coming from foundation and state grants, the Gateway II Trail System is almost complete. John predicts the last few miles of trail will be finished by the end of 2025.

A TRAIL ZONE FOR EVERY ABILITY

The new trail system includes three zones, each designed for a different purpose: The Learning Center Zone, the Community Zone and the Big Mountain Zone. The Learning Center Zone is 10 miles of trails specifically designed for families with children. "The idea of the learning zone is that you can take your kids or beginner mountain bikers or hikers who don't want to go down tough steep trails with rocks," says John. "Children can learn to mountain bike. There are no rock features or jumps." Families can park at the Nordic Center parking lot to embark on the Learning Zone trails.

The Community Zone is 15 miles of easy, flowing, 13 ▶

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The Gateway Trail System is designed especially for children and families to hike, bike and enjoy.



wide, smooth trails, appropriate for most hikers and mountain bikers, from beginning to intermediate. Filled with opportunities for scenic overlooks and areas to put down a blanket and picnic, this is a popular trail zone.

The Big Mountain Zone is 11 miles of mountain bike-centric trails. Although hikers can navigate some trails in this zone, a few trails will be so rocky and steep they are mountain bike preferred or mountain bike only. When complete, there will even be a seven-mile trail that will go from Vista Point down to the south end of the town of Mount Shasta.

In the summertime, hiking or biking the Gateway Trails System is a great way to get away from sweltering high temps. Most of the trails in all zones are shaded. When it's 115 degrees in Redding, it can be 80 degrees in the shade on a Gateway trail, according to John.

GATEWAY II IS HELPING TO BUILD COMMUNITY

In addition to creating meaningful jobs associated with the construction, equipment operation, engineering and design, permitting, assessment and surveys, community outreach, project management and more, the Gateway Trail System expansion is also expected to generate \$1 million per year in total revenue for surrounding communities from increased outdoor recreation spending.

Volunteers will help “buff up” and maintain the trails. AmeriCorps workers, (along with the U.S. Forest Service), as well as MTSA and SORA volunteers will be doing the fine rake-work on the recently completed trails. John says, “Now our job, if we don't plan any other trails, is to maintain all these trails, which is a huge job. We are going to need money and a paid crew to maintain 46 miles of trails in the future.”

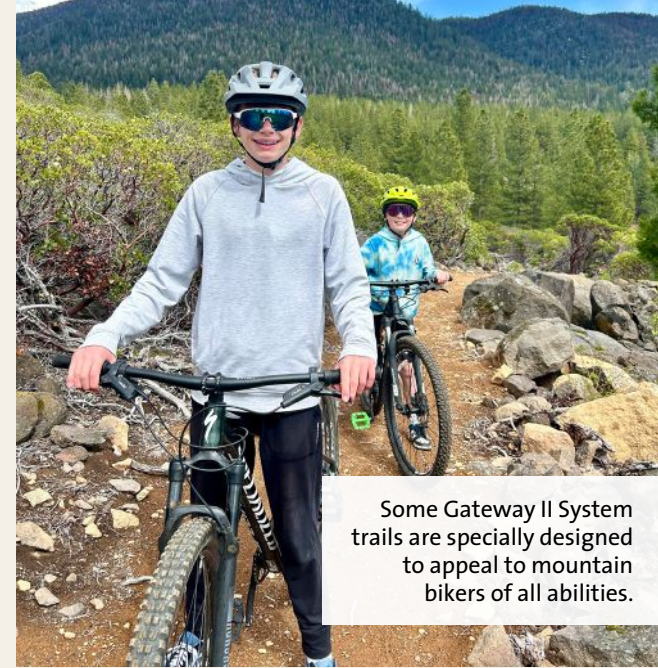
If you would like to get out in nature and help with the finish work on these trails, or donate to maintain these exceptional scenic pathways, go to mountshastatrailassociation.org.

TRAIL STEWARDSHIP IS UP TO ALL OF US

Increasing use of trailheads, trails, lakes and rivers has resulted in littered trails, overflowing garbage cans and damage to landscape. Below are some simple steps

everyone can take to help conserve this uniquely beautiful area. Motorized vehicles of any kind, including motorized bicycles are prohibited on the Gateway Trail System. If it makes noise or spews exhaust, leave it home.

- 1. Plan Ahead:** Check out the maps on the Mount Shasta Trail Association website to plan your trip and print one out from the MTSA website to take with you. Or download one of the local trail map apps. Dress appropriately for hiking and changes in temperature. Check the weather, carry appropriate food, water and spare clothing. Let someone know where you are planning to be for the day.
- 2. Pack it In, Pack it Out:** You're responsible for everything you bring or create, including plastic, food, garbage, human waste and any ceremonial items, (crystals, sage, flowers, fruit or other foods, etc.). Dig cat holes 200 feet from water and trails. NEVER leave toilet paper in the forest. Take all ceremonial items home with you. Many of these items can be toxic to animals, including incense and some flowers.
- 3. Don't Be a Taker:** Don't take any natural souvenirs from the forest. Leave nature the way you found it. This means letting wildflowers grow so they can reproduce and be there for pollinators and other hikers to enjoy.
- 4. Stick to the Path:** Stay on established and designated National Forest System trails. This prevents damage to plants and animal habitats – and reduces the chance of your getting lost.
- 5. Control your Beasts:** Your canine companions are welcome, but please scoop up after your pet does its business on the trail. Keep your pet under control, (leash or voice command). Don't allow pets to chase wildlife, disrupt the landscape or menace or bark at other hikers and bikers.
- 6. Listen to Smokey:** Check with local ranger stations on campfire regulations. In many locations, campfires are not allowed or require a permit.
- 7. Know about H2o:** Don't wash in streams, rivers or lakes. Carry water 200 feet from the source to wash dishes, clothes or yourself. Don't allow soap to get into waterways where it can poison plants and animals. ■



Some Gateway II System trails are specially designed to appeal to mountain bikers of all abilities.

MTSA PARTNERS WHO HAVE HELPED TO MAKE THE DREAM OF THE GATEWAY II TRAIL SYSTEM A REALITY

- [U.S. Forest Service, Shasta-Trinity National Forest](#)
- [McConnell Foundation](#)
- [California Natural Resources Agency](#)
- [Mt. Shasta Mountain Bike Association \(Bike Shasta\)](#)
- [Friesen Foundation](#)
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- [Quercus Consultants](#)
- [Mountain Runners](#)
- [Siskiyou Outdoor Recreation Alliance \(SORA\)](#)
- [Pusher Video Production](#)
- [Shasta Gravity Adventures](#)



Stacey Leigh Mohr has been hiking and camping throughout the trails and byways of the Sierras since she was a young child. Her family taught her an appreciation of the pristine wilderness and the importance of preserving the natural beauty of wild places.

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Stay Connected to Nature in The New School Year

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Photo by Kimberly Parodi.

Summer is such an enjoyable, relaxing time for children. Yet when school starts up again everyone may feel tense as they go back to super structured lives. Between homework, balancing extracurricular activities and changes in weather, families can easily forget to prioritize outdoor time.

It is vital that we make time to enjoy nature and the great outdoors since it can help reduce stress and bring a sense of calm. Our children need a break after school and on the weekends from their schoolwork and extra-curricular activities. Nature is that perfect break.

Just because summer is over does not mean you need to completely say goodbye to playing freely outside, family barbecues and outdoor adventures. Your family can still benefit from nature connection even after school starts. Here are five simple ways to keep your family connected to nature, even in the midst of a busy school year.

FREE PLAY OUTSIDE IS KEY TO UNWINDING

Even if your children have recess at school, they

still need time to unwind after school and weekends in addition to organized sports practice. Children of all ages need unstructured free play to be creative and let loose with their friends or siblings. Let them jump rope, blow bubbles, play a game of pickup basketball with the neighborhood kids or make their own obstacle courses in the backyard. Install a swing set for younger children, have equipment for fun games around for all ages and host groups of kids over for a backyard barbecue.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEER WORK IN NATURE

Volunteer work while spending time in nature helps reduce stress. When we give back to our community, we experience a physiological change called a helper's high. This euphoric physical sensation results from our brain releasing chemicals called endorphins such as dopamine, which makes us feel elated and excited. As a result, we experience positive health changes including less stress, anxiety and depression. Other benefits of volunteering include experiencing more compassion, feeling more connected to our community, being

more grateful for what we have in life and viewing the world from a broader perspective. Some ideas for family volunteering in natural settings include working in a community garden; doing a park cleanup; caring for animals at a nature center, horse ranch or animal shelter; and weeding, planting seeds, sifting compost, digging or watering at a local CSA (community supported agriculture) farm.

GROWING A GARDEN ENCOURAGES HEALTHY EATING AND BUILDS COMMUNITY

Gardening is a wonderful way to encourage children to spend more time outside in nature. Growing fruits and vegetables together as a family can be a fun, engaging and calming activity. In addition to the general benefits of being outside in nature, gardening offers a healthy distraction, provides a chance for some light exercise, encourages children to eat healthier, instills an appreciation for where food comes from and the work involved in making every meal and it builds community.



Engage your children in gardening by buying them their own gardening tools, asking them to pick out the types of produce they want to grow and using the produce you grow to cook meals together. If you don't have the room or desire to create a garden in your own backyard, collaborate with a neighbor or purchase a plot to tend at a local community garden. You can also start slow by growing a few herbs on your windowsill or one vegetable at a time in a large flower pot.

CHOOSE SCHOOL PROJECTS THAT INVOLVE NATURE

There are so many ways to incorporate nature into schoolwork. For example, if your children have an art project, take them outside to create a nature scene or go on a nature scavenger hunt and put together a collage of leaves, sticks, flowers and other items they collect. Enhance their school lessons by working on science kits and taking them to local museums or nature centers that relate to the topics their teacher is covering. Simple experiences like going to a farmers market to learn firsthand about farming or gazing at the stars in the evening sky can enhance what they are learning at school. The best part is when they experience nature for themselves, they will gain a greater appreciation for what they

are learning about and be in awe of the world around them.

BREAK THE ROUTINE BY VISITING INSPIRING NATURE SPOTS

Give your kids a break from all their school commitments by heading out for some nature time. Try a new bike path, rent a boat for a few hours, take a day trip to a park or nature preserve, or plan a longer vacation during a school break that involves nature exploration. Some nature spots to add to your list include mountains, rivers, forests, farms, hiking trails, waterfalls, botanical gardens, canyons and caves. The most important thing is to stretch your comfort zone and break your normal routine to enjoy new nature experiences together as a family. ■



Sandi Schwartz is a mother of two who writes about parenting, wellness, and environmental issues. Her latest endeavor is a parenting book about how nature can help children feel happier and calmer.



Red Bluff residents Leslie and her daughter, Violet, know that working in the garden after school, growing and eating your own produce, is a great way to stay in touch with nature. Photo by Kimberly Parodi.

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CELEBRATING NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE YOUTH STYLE WITH SUPAMAN SEPTEMBER 7

To uplift is to inspire and, in early September, Tehama County Health Services Agency is partnering with Apsáalooke rapper and fancy dancer, Christian Parrish Takes the Gun, professionally known as Supaman, to uplift all ages with song, dance, teaching and, to put it simply, stunning beauty. Christian describes himself on his website as a Native American dancer and innovative hip-hop artist who has dedicated his life to empowering and spreading a message of hope, pride and resilience through his original art form. His tour of the country, as he says, “spreading the good medicine of resiliency, love, laughter and inclusion,” includes a Sept. 7 stop in Red Bluff at the Tehama District Fairgrounds for a special Native American cultural event.

A CELEBRATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE

Avery Vilche, health educator for Tehama County Health Services Agency (TCHSA) Behavioral Health, first saw Supaman perform at the Butte College Big Time celebration last year. “I was floored by what an amazing performer he was with such a positive message. I knew he’d be someone we’d want to come to Red Bluff,” she says.

Avery was excited at the opportunity to bring Christian to Tehama County for a free, large-scale, one-day Native American Cultural Celebration on Sept. 7. “The celebration will bring together local and non-local Native Americans sharing their cultures through drumming, dancing, storytelling and a World Eskimo Indian Olympics demonstration, which includes some fun competitions such as four man carry, knuckle hop, head pull, Eskimo stick pull, arm pull and ear weight,” she says. Although they have yet to meet in person, Avery and Christian have similarities in their backgrounds. Both are Native Americans who experienced unique challenges and blessings which made them who they are today.

CHALLENGING LIFE EXPERIENCES LEAD TO A RETURN TO NATIVE CULTURE

Christian was born in Seattle, Washington and grew up in Crow Agency, Montana. He and his brother were the children of struggling alcoholics. In an interview in The Moon Magazine, Christian says he and his brother spent their childhood in foster care before being returned to their mother, whom he calls his hero because



Avery Vilche credits her mom, Rose Albrichtson, as her inspiration for competing in the the World Eskimo Indian Olympics. Avery said, “I wanted to make her proud that even though I wasn’t raised in Alaska I could still bring her home a medal.”

“she did the work to get her life together.” While still in elementary school he began writing poetry and dancing at powwows, introduced by his maternal grandfather. Christian says, “I was really drawn to hip-hop when it first came out. It was the voice of oppressed people, which was similar to the experience of Natives.”

Avery is Inupiaq and explains her unique heritage. “My mom was born in Golovin, Alaska. She was one of 17 children. When she was 5, her dad and oldest brother went out on the dog sled to go seal hunting. They never came back. It’s assumed they went through the ice and died. Because of the dire nature of the situation, my grandma had to adopt out her three youngest children which included my mother. Mom was raised by a white couple in Sweet Home, Oregon. She met my dad there. She was reunited with her mom and siblings after high school and was able to get back in touch with our culture.”

NEW WAYS TO PRESERVE NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE

Avery and Christian both want to encourage youth to get back in touch with their culture by presenting Native American heritage in a relatable way. Christian says, “Utilizing and embracing technology can be a way of preserving culture. Just having access to different ways of learning and participating is important. Also, we need to ask ourselves how we teach culture to our youth so they value it enough to want to participate and preserve it themselves when they are bombarded by a tidal wave of information every day.”

“We promote intergenerational learning from Native elders’ teaching and having Native youth performing,” Avery says. “We love having families come and learn about our cultures. It encourages respect and appreciation for Native American cultures. Everyone enjoys seeing the different dances and hearing the drumming and singing and stories. And there is an opportunity for everyone to come and join in the dancing when the MC announces the Round Dance. It’s a beautiful show of unity and it’s a lot of fun.”

THE CULTURE BEARERS OF TEHAMA COUNTY FOSTERS INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING

In 2022, Avery, along with Native American and Alaska Native community members 17 ▶

in local nonprofits, tribal health organizations, tribal social services, local education agencies, county behavioral health and public health, volunteers and the Tehama County Arts Council, formed The Culture Bearers of Tehama County. This group has been spearheading local events with the Native American Cultural Celebration as their third this year. Avery says they “seek to bring events to our community that share culture, encourage appreciation of our cultures and foster intergenerational learning.” She emphasizes, however, that they would not have been able to bring Supaman here if it weren’t for two generous grants they received from United Way of Northern California; a Vaccine Equity Grant and a North State Equity Fund award.

BRINGING AWARENESS TO THE MMIW MOVEMENT

Part of being a culture bearer also includes dealing with hardships prevalent in tribal communities. Avery says that one main goal of the September event is to “highlight the MMIW, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Movement, to increase safety of our people and awareness of this grievous injustice.”

Even though the MMIW movement is gaining momentum across the country, more advocacy is still needed. “We need to be aware of the statistics and the danger that is being overlooked by society within our communities and ask ourselves what each of us can do to make a change,” Christian says,

SUPAMAN SHARES A MESSAGE OF SELF-ACCEPTANCE

“Tehama County needs more events like this,” Avery says. “More opportunities for people to enjoy different cultures, buy amazing Native made crafts, eat Indian tacos and experience the joy you feel when you hear the beautiful songs and see the wonderful dancers in their regalia being moved by the beat of the drum.”

Many have been moved by Christian’s Supaman performances and he hopes the experience inspires individuals attending the Native American Cultural Celebration. Christian shares that he also has an Apsáalooke name given to him by his grandfather. The name, Akemarsala, means “Good Fortune on Mother Earth.” When asked why his grandfather gave him the name, Christian answers simply, “He just wanted me to have a good life.” Similarly, Supaman wants to spread this simple message so that his listeners will have a good life, “You are perfect, you are enough. Stop believing the false perception of perfection. You were born perfect.” ■



Kate Hiller’s grandma instilled in her a respect of Native American culture from a very young age as well as an interest and admiration for a wide array of cultures.



Supaman performs in one of his many gorgeous Native American ensembles.

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The Schools Of Choice Educational Directory focuses on local public schools created through a partnership among parents, teachers and students. These charter and other types of schools aim to involve parents and give teachers and students the freedom to innovate, while providing a personalized learning environment for each student.

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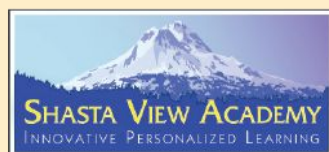
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When I was young, going outside was the default move for any bored child. And going outside almost guarantees some form of physical activity. These days there are a lot of distractions that can keep kids inside and occupied for hours. It's up to us as parents to create lots of opportunities for them to play outside.

**~Pamela Newman
Publisher**





Paradise Bikes owner Rich Colgin loves helping kids and families get back on the trail with fully functioning bikes.
Photos by Kate Hiller.

Let's Get Physical

THE BENEFITS OF BIKING IN THE NORTH STATE

Summer is in full swing and with the kids out of school a lot of parents are looking for ways to direct all that excess energy. The upside of saying goodbye to the confines of a rigid schedule is that time is no longer the boss. You are. And the world opens up with options.

Summer weather brings endless possibilities for bonding – and among my favorites is getting out of the house, getting active and sharing the experience of the great outdoors, running through the sprinklers, studying wildlife, foraging for berries and maybe best of all, bike riding. It is one of the most rewarding ways to get in touch with nature and enjoy some family bonding time. Without the constraints of a school schedule, summer is probably the best time for your family to, as Queen says, “get on your bikes and ride.”

WHERE TO START ON YOUR CYCLING JOURNEY

Whether you're an avid cyclist or just a little bike-curious, you'll find that the North State is one of the most beautiful places to get a bicycling habit going. With a plethora of stunning parks and bike trails, engaging downtowns and incredible mural art, (try the Redding Mural Art Ride or follow the Chico Public Art Map), there is so much to discover and enjoy.

23 ▶

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The Benefits of Biking in the North State

Building memories and fostering positive experiences are at the heart of many parental goals, but new things can be intimidating. One doesn't have to go from newbie bicyclist to pro overnight, though. Even a park trip or a neighborhood ride can bring you closer together and it can help build the confidence to go further and experience more. There's nothing wrong with starting small. Maybe you just want to bike down to a bakery with the kids for a breakfast treat in the morning, or go to an ice cream shop in the afternoon or make a weekly excursion to a playground or a picnic spot to incorporate a little more physical activity into your routine. There's no wrong way to get a cycling habit going and, according to a new [Cambridge University Study](#), any and all movement is a good thing for the body and the spirit.

GRAB YOUR HELMET, AND GET OUT INTO NATURE

If you're looking for some outdoor biking adventures for your family and you just don't know where to start, or you want to get the kids engaged with motion, [Shasta Gravity Adventures](#) offers both guided family rides and youth programs. Bicycling is a wonderful way to see more of your area and experience what's out there beyond the borders of your neighborhood. "Benefits of riding with your family are many!" says Shasta Gravity Adventure owner Christian Burke. "You are connecting in the outdoors and sharing challenging experiences that grow you as a family. You connect better when there is exercise and movement involved, and the memories you build are long-lasting."

TACKLING THE HURDLES OF GETTING A BIKE JOURNEY STARTED

Of course, finding the right bike or keeping it in working order can feel overwhelming. But whether you're looking for a new bike or your old one needs a little TLC, there are professional bike shops in the North State ready to help you get going. Rich Colgin of [Paradise Bikes](#), with locations in Paradise and Oroville, loves helping kids and families get biking. "I enjoy helping people find simple solutions to get their bikes back on the trails quickly and even educating people on how to service their bikes themselves," Rich says.

THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF BIKING

It's not all just about filling the summertime or getting in shape. Bicycling has lasting benefits for your child, building skills and habits that will follow them



Photo by Kate Hiller.

into adulthood. The National Institute of Health found that biking helps to improve balance, coordination and posture along with strengthening muscles and improving overall health.

Aside from the direct physical benefits your child will experience, there are social gains for your child and you. Taking trips with friends around the neighborhood or into nature is a great way to connect with others and develop a support network. Traveling in groups provides additional safety. To find a club near you, see the sidebar for North State bike clubs. Or start a club of your own!

There is something special about the feeling of freedom you get pedaling down a hill or into a summer breeze. Seeing the smile and hearing the laughter that

this experience draws from your little one is incredibly rewarding. If you're looking to get healthy or stay healthy, make memories, see the sights and get plenty of fresh air in the process, it's hard to find a better pathway to that goal than making bike riding a part of your family activities. ■



Brianna Lee Keaney is a parent, California native and ardent nature lover. Between gardening, writing, engaging with art, and caring for children and animals, she loves to sneak away to any place dense with greenery, water and wild things.



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EASY, HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCHES KIDS WILL LOVE

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Six-year-old Aria from Red Bluff is proud to help prepare her school lunch. When children participate in making their school lunches, the food is much more likely to come home in their tummies than in their lunch bags.
Photo by Kimberly Parodi.

It's that time again . . . let the packed lunches begin (sigh). Within the hustle and bustle of getting your kids out the door in the morning, packing lunches can be one of the tasks that adds to your stress. Making sure that your children eat breakfast is one thing. But doing so while also getting them out the door with a decent lunch? On some mornings, it feels impossible.

FIRST OFF, GO EASY ON YOURSELF

Parents are juggling so much these days. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves to make sure our children are getting what they need. When we've got picky eaters, it gets even more challenging. Make some goals to strive for, but it is OK to have those days where we merely "get by." Feeding them is better than not feeding them, so it is OK to push the easy button when it's needed. Finding creative ways to pack in nutrient density can make a big difference.

STABLE BLOOD SUGAR IS KEY TO A STABLE MOOD AND BEHAVIOR

Kids are growing their bodies and brains AND they are learning and being challenged, requiring energy and focus. Their bodies are hard at work. Children's brains burn through more glucose than adults do, so long fasting periods should be avoided. The natural fasting period during the night is long enough for a child's brain to go without energy from food, so don't skip breakfast. Carbs are important to sustain their energy requirements, but make sure to add in sources of protein to maintain stable blood sugar levels throughout the school day. Unstable blood sugars and hunger will result in erratic behaviors and moods.

Ideally, we would like our kids' lunches to be easy, nourishing and something that our children will eat. Is meeting these three goals realistic? Let's break it down with some packed lunch ideas that will satisfy these three important goals for our kids' lunches.

GOAL #1: LUNCHES THAT ARE EASY

Use leftovers

I learned early on that I wanted to save time and effort when packing lunches for my son. When he was attending preschool, I would be sure to cook extra dinner the night before for a quick and easy lunch the next day. Starting this habit while he was young made a big difference. He grew accustomed to leftover dinner for lunch at a young age. Meal ideas include soups, chicken quesadillas, pasta or lasagna, taco bowls, Indian dal or curry and rice.

26 ►



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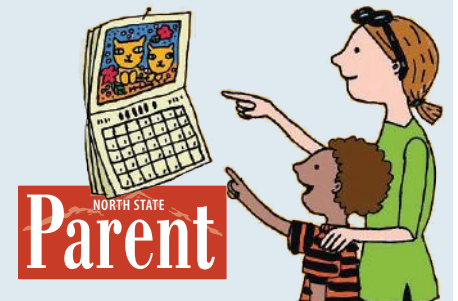
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GRADES TK-8

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Finger food lunches

Children love choices. Now that bento boxes are popular, lunch boxes with small compartments make it easy for kids to choose from a mix of finger foods. Some selections could include sliced summer sausage or salami, cheese slices, crackers, hummus or cream cheese. Add in some sliced cucumber or pickles to make “cracker sandwiches.” Fill the remaining compartments with veggies, fruits, olives, avocado, nuts or trail mix.

Roll-ups

Roll-ups are an alternative to sandwiches if you want to add some variety to the week. Make savory roll-ups using turkey, cream cheese or hummus and a pickle spear or by using a seaweed sheet, cream cheese, smoked salmon and avocado. Make sweeter roll-ups using tortillas, nut/seed butters with bananas, honey or cinnamon, or cream cheese with strawberries, peaches or other fruits. The ideas are endless.

GOAL # 2: LUNCHES THAT ARE NOURISHING

Similar to breakfast, our children need a balanced lunch to sustain their energy through the school day. Make it a goal to add fiber, protein and fat to their lunches and snacks. Limit the added sugar. When kids eat high amounts of sugar, starchy and high carb foods, their blood sugars and insulin levels can vary widely, leading to mood swings, lack of focus and behavior changes. Fiber, protein and healthy fats can help sustain a stable blood sugar for longer periods. Healthy fats are essential for brain growth as well.

Ideas for adding fiber: whole-grain bread for sandwiches, a variety of fruits and vegetables (leaving the skin on is a plus), nuts and seeds, as well as oats, brown rice and whole grain pasta.

Ideas for adding protein: hard-boiled eggs, eggs baked into foods, meatballs, grilled chicken or fish, jerky, cheese sticks and protein bars (> 8g protein). Include some granola to eat with yogurt to add in more protein (and fiber). Look for low sugar bars and granola.

Ideas for adding healthy fats: olives, avocado or guacamole, nuts such as macadamias, pecans or brazil nuts or add in an easy no-bake fat bomb or energy ball. Coconut oil, butter or ghee are excellent options to add into your cooking.

GOAL #3: LUNCHES YOUR KIDS WILL EAT

Now that we’ve covered easy and nutritious lunches, will the kids eat them? What good is an easy and nutritious lunch if the food comes back home, or worse, it ends up in the trash at school? This can be challenging, especially for children that are picky eaters.

START GOOD HABITS FROM THE BEGINNING

Most children will go through picky-eating stages. However, infants that are fed a wide variety of tastes, textures and foods – and if this remains consistent through toddlerhood – can help keep the picky-eating habits mild or short-lived.. Keep offering a wide variety of foods with every meal and avoid becoming a short-order cook for each child’s preferences.

INVOLVE YOUR KIDS IN CREATING THEIR LUNCHES

- Find creative ways to allow your children to be involved.
- Provide them with lists of high fiber, protein and quality fat foods. Let them pick from each list and create their own lunch. This may not be something you can do every day, but even once a week can allow them some autonomy and begin to teach them about nutrition.
- Let them be creative with roll-ups. Encourage them to try new combinations of ingredients.



Photo by Kimberly Parodi.

- Encourage them to “eat the rainbow” to add variety to their diet. Challenge them to eat plant-based foods that are red, orange, yellow, green and blue/purple each day. M&M’s and fruit loops don’t count!
- Include choices they love.
- Be sure to add some of their favorite snacks or treats. It will keep lunches interesting for them and it will teach them that finding balance is important. ■



Heidi Haskins is a functional health coach and founder of Rooted Child Health. She works with families to find root-cause solutions to children’s health concerns. She has a 23-year background in health care working as an RN and NP in pediatrics. She combines her nursing background with

the principles of Functional Medicine, looking at nutritional, environmental, and lifestyle factors to help children find true health. You can learn more at www.rootedchildhealth.com



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