

# WESTCHESTER family™

November 2010

FREE

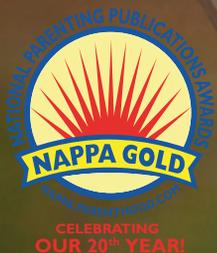
HOW TO PLAN  
**A Joint  
Birthday  
Party**

THE TRUTH ABOUT  
**Growing  
Pains**

**Pamper  
Your Pet!**

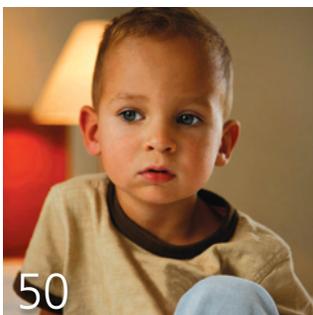
Whole Foods Market  
**YUMMY  
STUFFING  
RECIPE**

**34 Top Toys, Games,  
DVDs and Story CDs**



# contents

november 2010 volume twenty-two • number eleven



## FEATURES

### 22 Great Gifts for Kids

Jump-start your holiday shopping with these winners from the 2010 National Parenting Publications Awards (NAPPA) competition. NAPPA's team of expert judges - with the help of parent and child testers - present you with their top picks.

### 34 The Joint Birthday Party

If you are looking to simplify your child's birthday party and save money, consider having a joint birthday party. Learn how teaming up can double or triple the fun!

## DEPARTMENTS

8 **editor's note**  
Happy Birthday

12 **out & about**

14 **family f.y.i.**

18 **what's new**

20 **good stuff**  
Pamper Your Pet

48 **education**  
Parent & Child

50 **health notes**  
Growing Pains  
Ask the Specialist

54 **let's go to ...**  
Times Square

74 **a household word**  
Coming to a Campus Near You

## CALENDAR

Family Activities for November

57 top pick

62 Broadway scene

68 city picks

70 Connecticut corner

72 parent education & support

## ADVERTISING

30 Holiday Gift Guide

38 Party Planning

73 Classifieds

73 Take Note

## NEXT MONTH



### Homework Help

Whose homework is it? Probably not yours, but somehow every evening you get drawn into one assignment or another. Learn what it means to really help your children, encourage their independence and make your evenings much more peaceful.

**NAPPA** – The 2010 NAPPA awards for children's products are out. Find out which books, music, software, websites and video games are the best for youngsters this holiday season.

• **Plus ... Westchester Family's** award-winning searchable **Calendar** for families and much more!

**Look for it starting November 22!**



## ON THE COVER

16 Yummy Stuffing Recipe

20 Pamper Your Pet!

22 Top Toys, Games, DVDs and Story CDs

34 A Joint Birthday Party

50 Growing Pains

COVER PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

By Traci L. Suppa

# Times Square

## Kid-friendly Attractions, Entertainment, Dining and Shopping

At Manhattan's epicenter, Times Square is a 24/7 celebration of sight and sound. Within a five-block radius, there are enough attractions, theaters, restaurants and shops to easily fill a day of fun appropriate for all ages. Don't let winter weather prevent you from visiting over the holiday season, because there's always plenty going on!

### First Stop

With the kids' energy level at a high point, start your day at Madame Tussauds wax museum, Ripley's Believe it or Not! Odditorium or the Discovery Times Square Exposition, where the popular "King Tut NYC: Return of the King" exhibit runs through early February. Madame Tussauds offers your tweens the opportunity to have their photo taken with celeb likenesses of Miley Cyrus, Johnny Depp and Robert Pattinson. Here's a tip: aim your camera directly into the eyes of the wax figure for the most realistic outcome.

You'll find the amazingly lifelike statues posing in themed rooms on four floors. In the nightclub you'll find the *Twilight* heartthrob, along with Britney Spears, Madonna, and – a treat for moms like me – George Clooney. We hammed it up in the Oval Office, getting a photo of my son handing the "red phone" to President Obama for an important call.

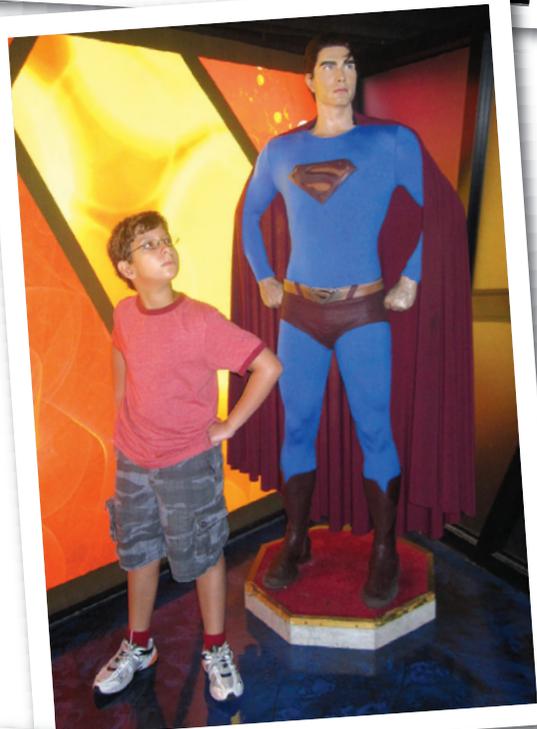
### Chow Down

There's no shortage of restaurants in Times Square offering something-for-everyone menus, like Virgil's Barbecue, Planet Hollywood, Applebee's, Ruby Tuesday's or Bubba Gump's Shrimp Company. I wanted to try a place unique to NYC, like Havana Central, but keeping my picky eaters in mind, opted for the Hard Rock Café for juicy burgers and a peek at some impressive rock memorabilia.

### All In One

In many stores, it's as much about the entertainment as it is the shopping. Toys "R" Us features an indoor, 60-foot tall Ferris wheel with cars themed for classic playthings, such as Mr. Potato Head and Monopoly, as well as a 20-foot animatronic T-REX dinosaur and a life-sized Barbie dollhouse. It wasn't easy drawing my son away from the LEGO section with a city skyline that nearly reached the ceiling.

Equally difficult was explaining to my daughter that we couldn't spend the entire afternoon in the Sanrio Luxe boutique, which





**The chocolate wall at the M&M's Store is a favorite spot.**

carries an irresistible array of upscale *Hello Kitty* merchandise, from clothing and personal accessories to home décor.

Boys will prefer checking out Midtown Comics, with two levels of floor-to-ceiling comic books and graphic novels. Here, my kids stretched their allowance far, with comic prices averaging \$3.50. My son picked *Sonic* and *Superman* comics, while my daughter settled on *Finding Nemo*. Parental guidance is suggested at this store, since there are adult-rated books.

**Snack Time**

For an afternoon chocolate pick-me-up, just look up. You can't miss the 215-foot Hershey's Bar and other chocolate treats on the façade of the Hershey's store. Inside, you can create a giant personalized Kiss, or take a photo holding the world's largest Hershey's Bar.

New York City's biggest candy store, however, is the three-story M&M's World across the street. It features the world's largest M&M display, an expansive wall of 72 tube dispensers from which you can pour your own combination of colors. The males in our party chose the New York Giants blend.

A new addition to the sugary retail scene in Times Square is Pop-Tarts World, which celebrates the sweet toaster pastry with interactive displays, entertainment and a café serving more than 30 treats made with Pop-Tarts, including trail mix and Ants on a Log. We were offered a free sample of a frosted cinnamon bun, but the buzz is all about the "sushi" roll – a Pop-Tart filling wrapped in a Fruit Roll-Up. We also used the Varietizer, a do-it-yourself vending machine, to create our customized 12-pack, with flavors like strawberry milkshake, s'mores and chocolate fudge.

**Lights On**

Times Square casts a magical spell at night, when the blazing billboards encircle you in pulsating light. Take it all in while heading to a Broadway show. This season's family fare includes classics such as *The Lion King* at the Minskoff Theatre and *Mary Poppins* at the New Amsterdam, as well as limited engagements like *Momentum* – a fast-paced dance, music and light show – at The New Victory. A brand new musical, *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, premieres in December at the Foxwoods Theatre with music written by U2's Bono and The Edge, and directed by Julie Taymor, who also directed *The Lion King*. ♦

Traci L. Suppa blogs about her family's travels at [www.GoBIGorGoHomeBlog.com](http://www.GoBIGorGoHomeBlog.com).

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