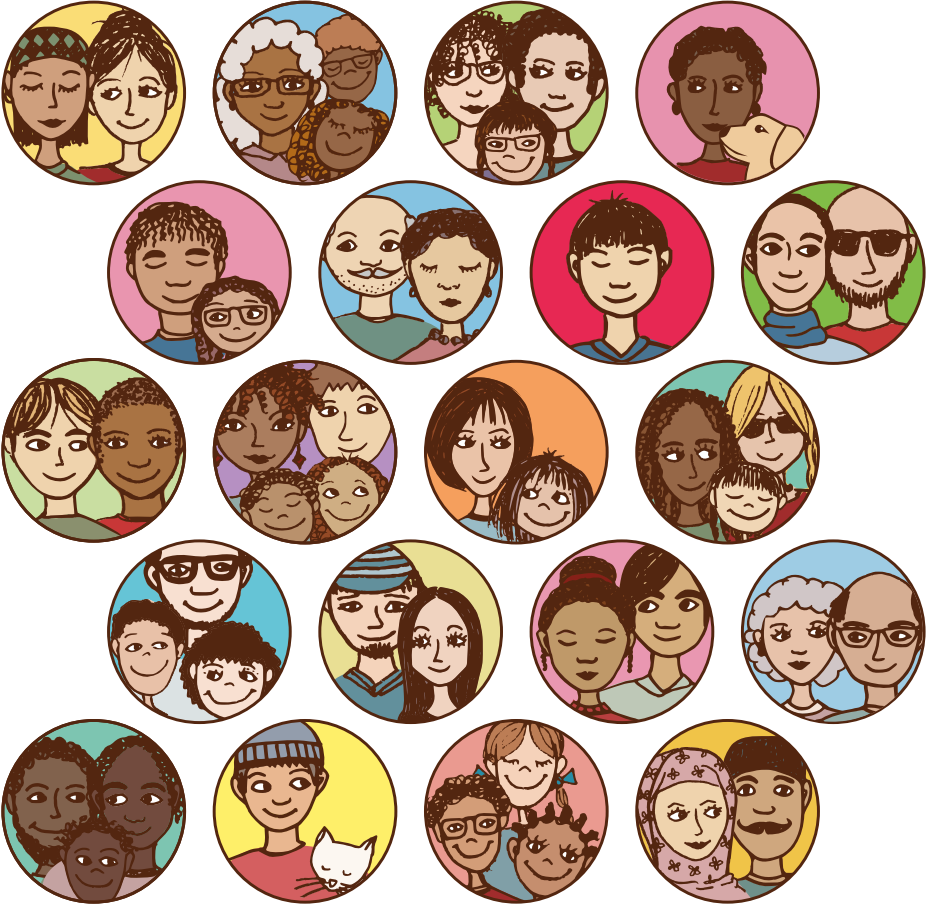


OUR FAMILIES



CELEBRATING THE RICHNESS AND DIVERSITY OF
FAMILIES AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO US



SHARING STORIES IS A FUNDAMENTAL
PART OF BEING HUMAN.

THEY HELP US UNDERSTAND, CONNECT
AND LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER.

FAMILY NETWORK

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO THE WONDERFUL STAFF
AT PEABODY, WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO EVERYBODY
WHO CONTRIBUTED. YOU MADE THIS BOOK HAPPEN.



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"EVERYONE NEEDS A HOUSE TO
LIVE IN, BUT A SUPPORTIVE FAMILY
IS WHAT BUILDS A HOME."
ANTHONY LICCIONE



FOREWORD

BY IAN MCDERMOTT

I think this book is a truly wonderful thing. I was trying to imagine something else, like a family, that was so universally understood and yet so diverse. There is a book called the Blue Zone which looks at areas of the world where people live longest and attempts to extract general lessons in terms of living long and happy lives. The apparently hugely diverse areas have one thing in common: a supportive and structured network of people, families there to offer support and care. A lot gets said about the world as it is today usually with a negative association. We are, however, so fortunate to live at a time and in a place where we are free to form bonds and relationships and to create and re-imagine our idea as family in a manner of our choosing.

I hope you enjoy the rich tapestry and eclectic mix of poetry, prose, pictures and anecdotes contained in this book. Life can be hard and challenging but it can also be rewarding and uplifting. This book sets out to feed the soul and makes us appreciate what is good amongst humankind.

Happy reading.

Ian McDermott
CEO of Peabody



DRAWINGS BY EMMA AGE 10 AND
LUKE AGE 6, CHILDREN OF LIN VONG



INTRODUCTION

BY LIN VONG

The aim of this book is to celebrate the beautiful strands of family life by sharing your stories, drawings, photos and poems. We have also sprinkled throughout the book amazing advice garnered from experts that the Family Network have had the pleasure to work with over the last three years.

This is a love letter to all families, whatever shape and size you are. Let's shine a light with our stories so that others can get a glimpse into our world. Compassion comes when we know more about one another and the more we know, the more we can connect, the more we can understand and care about each other and wouldn't that be the kind of place that we all want to work and live in.

My deep thanks and gratitude to everyone that has contributed to this book. It has been a wonderful way to spend pockets of my day reading and visually enjoying your work.

I hope this book brings joy to your day and makes you smile every time you open it.

With love,

Lin
Founder and Co-Lead of the Family Network

EXPRESSING YOURSELF

BY LOU TRELEAVEN

I was very excited to be asked to help edit this book. As a children's author, I'm passionate about creativity and I firmly believe that anyone can write. Expressing yourself is a basic human need and to be able to record your words so they can be read by others is an amazing thing.

When I'm writing for children, I'm primarily thinking of what will entertain them, but invariably influences from my own family and childhood seep through. My picture book 'Daddy and I' was based on childhood walks with my father which seemed to go on for miles into the mysterious unknown. It was only when I was an adult that I realised he had just taken us to the local village and back!

But family can mean so much more than just our immediate relatives. Old friends can be closer than any family member, and our pets love us more than we will ever understand. Families are what you make them, and I'm proud to be a part of celebrating that in this book.

Lou Treleaven
Author and Writing Coach

ARTWORK BY RHYS, SON OF
CAROLINE TURBERFIELD





A JOY TO BE INVOLVED

BY PAUL BEATON

When Lin contacted me asking for my help with designing this book, I jumped at the chance as it was an opportunity to do something different. We had our first Teams call and it was great to meet and speak to Lin and Lou. Listening to Lin talk, it was really lovely to see the passion and devotion she has for the Family Network. I really admire what she has done and I was delighted to get involved.

In putting together the design for this book, I looked at how I'd done previous ones for friends and family. They always get in touch for special gifts they want for a 'big' birthday such as a 50th, or 60th. I usually receive a load of photos via Whatsapp - which I then turn into a book just like this one. I have to say I was incredibly touched by the stories, poems, photos, and drawings people created for this book.

Covid and the many lockdowns kept a lot of us apart and it's made many of us realise just how lucky we are to have family and friends. It really put things in perspective for me and made me focus on family more than ever. I'm so happy to be involved in creating this special book all about the families we have and the families we make, it's been a joy and a pleasure.

Paul Beaton
Senior Brand Manager

FAMILY PORTRAIT BY PAARUS
AGE 11 AND HENNA BATRA



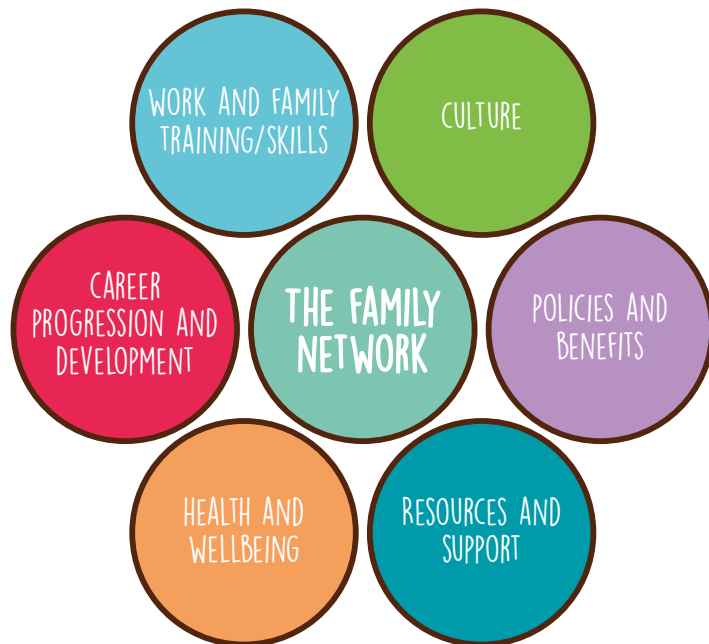
ABOUT THE FAMILY NETWORK

Our vision is to support our employees with caring and parenting responsibilities and help make their working lives easier and happier. We act as a catalyst to help Peabody become the organisation of choice for those with families.

We organise events and workshops, provide training opportunities as well as access to an amazing array of resources and tools via memberships with fantastic family-related organisations.

We also work with HR, L&D and senior management to provide feedback to consultations and to influence company policy to help Peabody become a more family friendly workplace.

OUR WORK IS GUIDED BY THE SIX STRANDS SHOWN BELOW



ARTWORK BY KOSTA SHUVALOV



FAMILIES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

BY KATE POYSER

Families come in all shapes and sizes. Mine comes with special needs and lots of challenges but I wouldn't change it. Vincent was born in September 2010. He was my third child; however my other two were grown up and had flown the nest being aged twenty-five and twenty-one years, so yes I had a large age gap. My mum always joked I never got the timing of babies correct - I had two in my teens and then Vincent in my forties.



VINCENT AND ME

Anyway, from the start being Vincent's mum was different. He never slept well, hated being put down and didn't like changes in routines, even from newborn. I was following baby-led parenting so none of this was really an issue as I was being led by him.

At eight months old Vincent had started to crawl. He hit most of his milestones as expected; however, he gathered an obsession for my Henry Hoover. I couldn't put it away or he would have a tantrum. Everyone thought it was really cute as Henry is a rather likeable character. This obsession has never gone away and Vincent is now the proud owner of four Henrys, three Hettys and two Dysons; he has visited the Numatic factory and has loads of other Henry-themed bits and pieces.

This is the fun side of being Vincent's mum. He loves cleaning and cleans our house every day, even doing jobs that most people only do a few times a year. My house always smells amazing and everyone who visits says how clean and tidy it is, all thanks to my ten year old son. A lot of people remark that his obsession is strange; however, I am glad he is active and not stuck in front of a screen all day.

From a very early age, Vincent displayed some challenging behaviours. I spoke to our health visitor when he was just a year old but she assured me this was normal. It didn't feel normal to me as his tantrums were many every day and much more intense than others his age, but she was the professional. I even had my mum and sister tell me if I didn't start to manage his behaviour they were worried about the outcome. Try as much as I could, nothing changed his behaviour regardless of the advice and strategies I used. I brought all the Super Nanny books and I felt like a complete failure. By this time I was a single mum and really struggling.

At eighteen months Vincent developed croup. He was really unwell and ventilated for a week. This was a really hard time for us, but we got through it and he recovered with no ongoing issues.

Fast forward a few years and Vincent started nursery. In came a lot of professionals, all intent on putting boundaries into Vincent's life as his behaviour was so challenging. I lost count of the number of parenting classes I was made to do and professionals showing up to show me how to implement time out; this was really distressing for me and Vincent and these interventions just seemed to make my son very unhappy. He ended up being excluded from the nursery permanently, which is almost unheard of according to Early Intervention Services.

I was sure there was something more going on with my son. I was assured it was a parenting issue and nothing more. I wish I had stuck to my guns but I believed the professionals; after all several were all saying the same thing. Eventually, Vincent was assessed for autism and ADHD. Both results were negative. I was told he had asymptomatic autism which basically means he fitted some of the autistic criteria but not enough to receive a diagnosis. By this time he had started primary school and his placement was breaking down; he was only part-time and most days were so challenging that I was called to collect him. When at school he was not taken into class but stayed in a corridor with his one-to-one support TA.

Not happy with this diagnosis, I requested a referral to Evelina Clinic in London for a second opinion; there was a nine month waiting list but there were no other options. We were eventually seen by Professor Baird, a top paediatrician in the UK for neuro-disabilities. That day we received a firm autism diagnosis with Pathological Demand Avoidance and Oppositional Defiance Disorder. At last, things now made a lot of sense. For five years I had not been believed or been labelled as an incapable parent when all along my child had autism and other neurodiverse conditions. I returned home feeling a sense of relief and anger. Relief as I had some answers but anger as my son had been denied appropriate support and we had been labelled. I thought this would be the end of our struggles. I thought going forward life would become so much easier as now my son and myself would get the services we needed to be appropriately supported. How wrong was I? Yes, he was placed into a special school for children with autism and now he could access special educational needs provision; however, these are severely limited and his placement broke down as they could not manage his challenging behaviour. There are no specialist school holiday provisions either that can manage his behaviour. He cannot attend mainstream events and he cannot attend special needs provision as they can manage autism but not challenging behaviour.

Due to risk and supervision needs, Vincent receives the high care component of Disability Living Allowance. However, I have been told he is not disabled enough to meet the criteria of Disability Children's Social Services. He receives high care DLA - how much more disabled could he be? Again this is the discrimination of having an invisible disability; he is not seen as disabled enough!

Vincent has now been placed in a brand new special school for high functioning autism with social, emotional and mental health needs.

However, low and behold, he only started on 6 September and here we are fourteen days later with the school already struggling to meet his needs and calling me to collect him as he is being too risky.

So at the tender age of ten, he has already lost four nursery/school placements and is showing signs of losing his new placement. Imagine how rejected he must feel in a system that is blind to his needs?

Some days I feel like I cannot go on, life is just too challenging. But then I look at my son, so innocent and failed by society and I realise: he is really a victim in all of this, failed by the very services that should have been able to support him from the day he was born but unable to recognise that his needs are just as real as a physically disabled child. My biggest fear is that he will be failed until he ends up in the prison or hospital system as there will come a time when his challenging behaviours are no longer seen as a childhood problem that he has no control over.

So next time you see a child in meltdown, please consider the wider picture and don't assume the child is naughty or the parent not coping. When my child melts down in public the worst thing people can do is try and communicate with him; people try to help but they just make the situation worse. When I come across this situation I carefully ask the parent if they need anything or any help, I let them lead and, if the answer is no, I carry on with my day.

Although our life is governed by what Vincent can cope with and I don't always get that right, with preparation and time we can often tackle things. We are even planning a trip to Florida next year. I must be brave to even try and attempt this but I want my son to have nice experiences and memories. After all, he is just a child. Yes, he requires his needs met in different ways to neurotypical children, yes this can be exhausting but remember: this is the reality for many families.



MADE BY KATE AND 10 YEAR OLD VINCENT "WE BEACH COMB FOR BITS TO USE IN ART PROJECTS"



OUR FAMILY OF TWO

BY ROXANNE BOTMAN

Just the two of us.
Creating our own memories and traditions.
Travelling the world and going on new adventures.
And having days of doing nothing that feel like everything.

Just me and you.
You'll have my back and I'll have yours.
Never doubting each other's dreams.
Our home will feel full.
Full of love, laughter, music, and dancing.

Just your hand in mine.
Writing our own rules.
Staying protected by love, respect, and friendship.
Leaving a legacy of true love.
Our sweet family of two.

TOGETHER BY HANNAH LEWIS AGE 18
DAUGHTER OF TIM LEWIS





HOW TO HAVE A MINDFUL MINUTE

BY DR SARAH SEASE, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

People often think that mindfulness requires significant preparation and daily devotion of time. While having a nice calming room and being in comfortable clothes can definitely help, it is not a requirement. Mindfulness can be done quickly and with little preparation.

Our minds are frequently distracted by the tasks that we need to do that day, last night's conversation or what is going to happen tomorrow or in the future which results in never fully being present in the moment and never feeling really connected with what you are doing. Taking a moment to engage in being mindful can help you reset your day and be more focused and present-minded for the rest of the day. It can be as short as a minute.

HOW DO WE TAKE A MINDFUL MINUTE?

Next time, let your attention focus on the process of what you are doing. If you are making a cup of coffee, for example, be aware of your breathing, notice how the cabinet handle feels in your hand as you open it to retrieve the bag of coffee. Be aware of how the bag crinkles as you pick it up. Take in the aroma of the coffee as you open it and try to identify the different smells. Listen to the sounds coming from the coffee machine. Be conscious of the weight and feel of the mug and how the coffee pours into your mug. Listen to the ding of the spoon against the cup as you add sugar or milk. It is as simple as that.

Take a minute and choose to be aware of what you are doing rather than letting your mind wander and you will feel more present, less distracted and less overwhelmed.



MINDFULNESS IS ABOUT PAYING ATTENTION
TO PURPOSE AND AWARENESS.

FOUR POEMS

BY PARA RAJAGOPAL

LIFE

Life is a journey so they say!
So here I am out in the world, hey!
I was a quiet child who was shy!
As I grew older watched my years go by!
Now I am a man and got kids of my own!
Oh my, how times have flown!
Love with fond memories of joy!
What a life I have lived, oh boy!

MOMENT IN TIME — CHANGES

Time after time emptiness within.
We aim high to be knocked down again.
We change our image to look the part.
If there are wings, I would fly high.
We move around in circles looking for answers.
Time will tell if we ventured too far.
Strange feeling of being shut in the houses.
Where is the real sunshine, the moon, the rain, for which we seek?
Shadows follow me waiting for me to make the first move.
Seasons come, seasons go, as we adapt to the surroundings.
The streets are empty, you can walk for miles. Spring is here with daffodils and Verónicas bloom.
Birds chirping in the streets, step out, fresh air to breathe.
I feel the family life with kids on computers, music and dancing entertains.
I am trying to exceed and back on my guitar again.

THE GARDEN

Remember those days when you sat up and watched the clouds go by!
Picture yourself in the garden shade!
Birds, bees and butterflies fly by as squirrels, foxes and hedgehogs come around for a visit!
They momentarily distract you as you relax within your own space!
Lavender, jasmine, honeysuckle and buddleia roam across the land!
Afternoon tea with family and friends, always a pleasant treat!
This tranquillity and halcyon feeling is a god's gift to be!
A little bit of paradise and escapism for the weekender is in sight!

FRUITS

Why does a fruit becomes fruitie?
If fruit has any sense, you can see it, you can smell it, you can taste it, you can feel it, crunch as it hits the teeth and it's gone.
Why do we like fruits? It's something extra after a meal that challenges your taste buds.
Don't fight it, just enjoy it, as it's part of nature!
It's better than you know it!

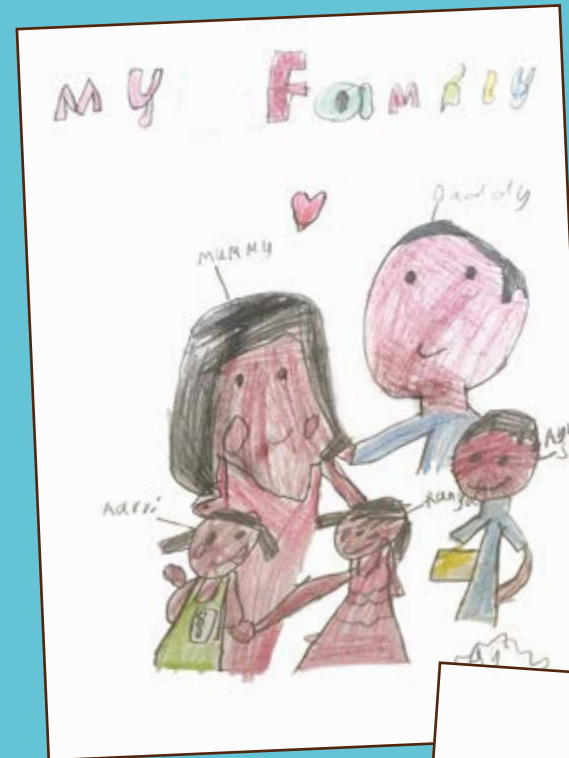




EIGHT MANTRAS FOR PARENTS

BY KAM TAJ, PERFORMANCE COACH

- 1 I can be happy even when my kids aren't happy.**
My emotional needs are detached from theirs.
- 2 I don't need to always fix their problems and clean up their messes.**
Building resilience.
- 3 I will be a role model for positive behaviours.**
Emotional hygiene, firm boundaries - no expectations for them to do the same.
- 4 I am growing. The more I work on myself, the better I can support my child.**
No projection of your own emotional stress; adapting and growing as a parent.
- 5 What I want now may not be what I want later - long-term focus!**
- 6 Other parents' business is other parents' business. I learn from others, but I do not need to do as others do.**
 - Focus on the goal – happy, healthy, strong sense of self
 - Be present and attentive to your own child's needs.
 - Stems from inferiority and fear that we're not being good parents.
- 7 I let my child live their own dreams, at their own pace.**
 - The more sacrifices we make, the more entitled we feel to control their dreams.
 - No more giving our kids an 'advantage' to be better than others.
 - Stems from our own fears (their basic needs not being met, 'failure' as a parent).
- 8 I am doing the best I can. Always.**



DRAWING BY AYUSH DIWAKAR
SON OF SONIA MOHAN



DRAWING BY AARIV AGE 6,
SON OF SAMANTHA DHANILALL

MY FAMILY

BY IAN MCDERMOTT

Family for me when I was young was a mixture of hilarity, sadness, and comfort. I grew up in the North-West of England in a place called Northwich, in mid-Cheshire. Whilst it sounds quaint it was, at that time, completely dominated by the chemical industry. My dad worked for ICI as did most of my primary school classmates' dads.

I grew up in a family of eight. There were six children: four boys and two girls. We divided the family into the 'big ones' and the 'little ones' and being the second youngest I was one of the three little ones. My mum was unwell for most of my upbringing, which meant that as children we were somewhat feral. My Mum and Dad did most of the parenting with the 'big ones' and left the 'little ones' to manage ourselves. As a result, we were able to go as we please, provided we were always home for tea! As adults the three younger children have a remarkable bond sharing a sense of humour, a collective memory and still holding the historic competitiveness we had as kids. Time spent with them is like climbing back into a comfortable space where you need to explain nothing.

To be honest at the time I didn't appreciate the privilege of being part of such a big family, instead I viewed it through the lens of what I didn't have. We didn't have a lot of money and I always wore hand-me-downs and hand knitted jumpers. One of my strongest memories was my sister getting back her repaired bicycle for Christmas. Seemed a bit unfair as I was riding it when it got hit by a car and mangled!

Our family holidays were always the best of fun. We went camping in an old frame tent. It shrunk every year until even with the soak away rubber at the bottom it couldn't reach the ground. My dad solved this by cutting the poles down and he had to bend down when entering the tent.

Despite the warmth that a large family bought me I always felt slightly different, as if I viewed the world slightly differently from the rest of my family. I was the only one not to go to the grammar school and later discovered that I had severe dyslexia, which was not well understood or supported at that time.

So today I am also part of a new family, the dyslexic family, and have loved discovering what I always thought was odd is actually shared by so many and explains so much.

Family is a nebulous concept and I have always thought it odd that people should have an opinion on who people do or don't fall in love with. However you define your family, whoever you choose to fall in love with or bring into that intimate space we call family, what we seek is the warmth, comfort and familiarity of those in whose company we feel secure and able to be our true self. Today we celebrate the fact that families come in all shapes and sizes and long may that continue.



LETTER TO MY DAUGHTER

BY RACHEL BROOKE

Letter to my daughter, my beautiful baby girl.

The one who made me a mummy and put me through labouring hell!

We have a special bond that I hope will span the years,

That will help us get through any worries and I'll wipe away any tears.

Letter to my daughter, may we laugh and have good times,

I fondly remember the early years and the constant nursery rhymes!

The cakes we bake, the crafts we make and the stories that we share,

I pray that they continue long after you outgrow the 'helping chair'.

Letter to my daughter, I wish you nothing but success,

As I tiptoe through the living room dodging all the mess!

I love your creativity, your sass, you always make me proud,

Even when I have a headache... you are rather loud!

Letter to my daughter, I can't wait to watch you grow,

To watch you work out problems and add to what you already know.

Letter to my daughter, we may not know what tomorrow has in store,

When I look into your eyes I know I could never have asked for more.

Darling girl know that you complete me and that can never be broken,

And I love you with all my heart even when it's unspoken.



DRAWINGS BY FLORENCE AGE 5,
DAUGHTER OF RACHEL BROOKE

SUMMER HOLIDAYS

BY ABISHAWN THAYAPARAN, AGE 14

The tunnel suddenly opened out into a glittering gallery of white crystals. I sat comfortably in my seat as I admired the beautiful caves. The sun soothed my skin as I looked down at the vivid, green sea from the ship. I felt the happy vibes spreading around the ship throughout the evening.

As time went by, we all saw different types of caves. But one stood out. The mouth of the cave became a welcoming blue eye as we entered it. Light shone through the top and the waves remained serene. It felt like a dream although it was time to leave.

The ship darted towards the middle of the sea, whilst I felt the gentle breeze that stroked my face. A few minutes later, there was something that danced through the sea. It was the dolphins.

Dolphins were lit up by a huge smile on their face. It was a circus act performed by the dolphins. The others on the ship enjoyed this. Even though they spoke a different language, we all had a connection through this excitement. The waves curled and lapped against the side of the boat when the dolphins faded into the distance.

It was close to sunset as we headed back to the shore. Everyone was delighted when they had felt the sand but it was time to go back to the hotel.

Sunset arrived in Portugal and we strolled with a warm smile. A smile that lasted for a long time...

LEAF ART BY
SHAHZAI B MUSTAFA — AGE 5
SON OF ASHIEYA MUMTAZ





ARTWORK BY HANNAH LEWIS AGE 18
DAUGHTER OF TIM LEWIS



Diego
Brando

DRAWING BY MARSHA SEATON
AGE 13, DAUGHTER OF
MARJORIE MBULO

HOW BEING A SINGLE PARENT CHANGED ME AND MY LIFE

BY LIN VONG

Relationships end for all kinds of reasons. When my marriage ended, I was on my own with two young children for the first time since being in university. I felt a great deal of shame, embarrassment and sadness about my marriage coming to an end and a lot of guilt for my children. None of my close friends or family members were separated or divorced, in fact, I didn't know anyone that was separated or divorced. I felt judged or pitied when I told friends and family that my marriage had ended, although looking back, I am sure it was mostly in my head.

I also felt deeply vulnerable. I haven't actually been on my own in my adult life. I've always been with someone; I had always been dependent on another person. Now, the buck stopped with me. Fixing things around the house, sorting out the house insurance, dealing with the car, taking care of the school admin, dropping the kids off at their various after-school activities etc. all rested with me. The list of all the things that I needed to do felt overwhelming from waking up on a wintery morning to find that the boiler had stopped working so there was no heating or hot water until I got it fixed to small trivial stuff that I had taken for granted like taking the rubbish out or not having someone who could pop out to pick up a missing ingredient from the supermarket. The other big change was my financial safety net was gone. Now it really mattered if I didn't work or manage my finances properly, things could get really bad very quickly and I have two little people who are dependent on me to feed and clothe them.

The reality of my new situation felt scary. Some nights my mind would be racing, running through my never-ending to-do list, and other nights I would slump into bed feeling completely exhausted. Some days I felt I couldn't cope, that it was all too much for me to handle and I was not strong enough. But over time, something miraculous happened. I got used to dealing with many things, juggling multiple projects and demands. My confidence started to grow and then one October day as I dropped off my children at school, I started talking to someone from the school. I was telling her about an idea that I had to set up an employee network at work and I would call it the 'Family Network'. It would support employees with caring and parenting



responsibilities to help make their working lives easier and happier. She asked me why I didn't just do it. "I am not the right person," I protested. "I couldn't possibly lead an employee network." She gave me a smile and said, "You can."

And sometimes in life, you just need a nudge. On the way into work, I thought, "Maybe she is right, I could do it" and before I could change my mind, as soon as I sat down at my desk I sent HR an email with the sentence, "Hello, I would like to set up an employee network and call it the Family Network."

That was in October 2018 and over the next three years, we have organised thirty events that have covered a wide variety of topics such as how to

age well, nutrition, building better relationships and financial wellbeing. Events such as the mega-popular 'Children at Work Day' and 'Spreading Joy During Lockdown' campaign and fun competitions such as the 'Family Art Competition' and the 'Family Talent Contest'. We've started the Family Network Book Club with two groups, fiction and nonfiction. We kicked off the 'Return to Work Programme' initiative which is currently underway and being led by HR. We have also taken part in various family-related policy consultations for HR, set up memberships to CityParents and Working Families for staff and most of all, I am deeply touched by all the staff that have reached out to the Family Network at a time when they needed help and support.

With my growing confidence, in January 2019 I boldly set up a coding club for eight children at my local library despite not having a technical background. No one would have imagined this including me considering that I have trouble using my iPhone. The previous coding club had come to an end the previous year because the person who had been running it left. I thought at the time, if I could set up an employee network at work then surely, I could set up a small coding club and besides it would be so sad for the children if it came to an end as I believed coding was an important skill for children to learn. Today that coding club has become a registered charity called Ignite Hubs and we support nearly 100 children and young people a week. In September 2021 I won 'Volunteer of the Year' at the Third Sector Awards and Ignite Hubs was shortlisted as 'Education & Training Initiative of the Year' at the Women in IT Awards.

The other day, I met with friends and over the course of lunch, the conversations naturally progressed to talking about each other's partners. "My husband is like my PA," one friend claimed proudly.

Another said, "I am not allowed to do the grocery shopping; my husband doesn't trust me to select the fruits and vegetables so he does all of the shopping in my house."

I smiled as I realised how far I'd come. I am not the same person that I was four years ago. There have been low points (a few that brought me to my knees) but also many high points too and, along the way, I have rediscovered myself and found out surprising things that I never knew I was capable of. If you are going through a difficult time, I've always found this poem immensely helpful in keeping me going. Have faith in yourself and in what's to come. Keep going, I am cheering you on every step of the way.

THIS TOO SHALL PASS

WHEN THINGS ARE BAD, REMEMBER:
IT WON'T ALWAYS BE THIS WAY.
TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME.
WHEN THINGS ARE GOOD, REMEMBER:
IT WON'T ALWAYS BE THIS WAY.
ENJOY EVERY GREAT MOMENT.

AUTHOR: UNKNOWN



OUR MUM

BY RACHEL BROOKE

Our mum was one of a kind and we have a lot of fond memories that make us smile.
She loved wildlife and to make sure the birds were fed, she would go that extra mile.
Whatever the weather, rain, sun, snow or fog,
Food would be put out for the foxes and the occasional hedgehog!
Our mum taught us to be polite and always say pardon,
But interrupted nearly every conversation with, 'Oh look there's a jay in the garden!'

Whatever the occasion, Mum was welcoming and the door was always open
to friends and family.

We will love remembering her laughing and telling jokes happily.

Our mum enjoyed cooking and was the best at baking cakes,

But this nearly ended during a trip to the woods with Paul yelling 'Sorry Mum,
the bike's got no brakes!'

We will always remember long summers and being the busiest house in town,
As during the holidays, there were always half a dozen cousins running around!

Our mum loved music and the kitchen was her 3 am dance floor.

Many a night Ian could be heard sighing, 'Mum please don't play Queen anymore!'

When Mum played 'Stairway to Heaven', she knew all the words, it was one of her
favourite songs, and whether Rachel liked it or not she had to sing along!

Our mum loved the countryside and Norfolk she was born and bred,
and liked nothing more than a Kings Lynn banger for her Christmas morning spread!

Although you are no longer here, we know you are never far away.

We will keep your memory alive by making you proud in each and every way.

We love you Mum and we know you're looking down on us from up high.

Forever in our hearts, as each day passes by.

I AM OCEAN

BY AYISHAON THAYAPARAN AGE 12

I am ocean.

In the sun I shimmer and dance like a blue flame.

My colours show off but show no shame.

When nothing occurs, in silence I sleep.

My depth is surprising, I am pretty deep.

But though my story seems nice it can be very dark.

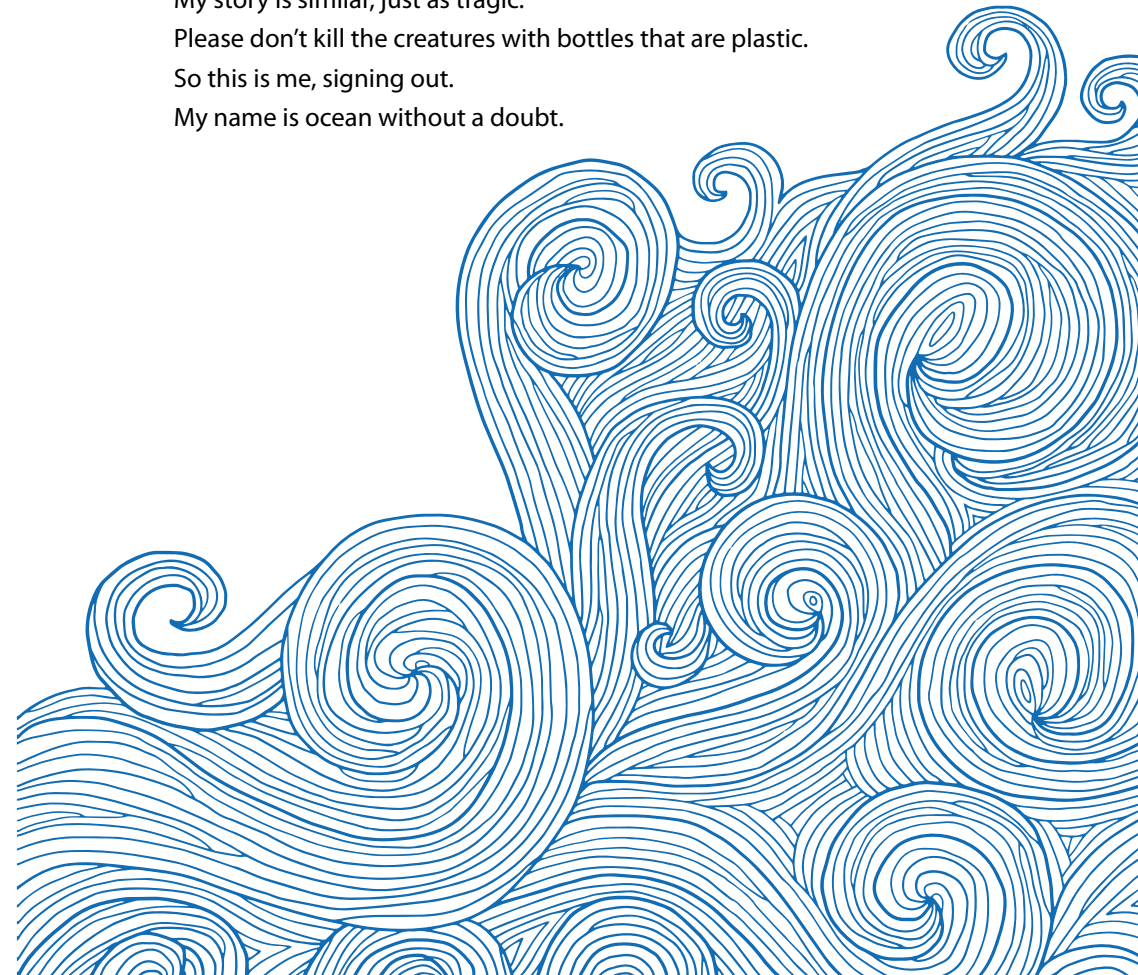
Air pollution, climate change and burning tree bark.

My story is similar, just as tragic.

Please don't kill the creatures with bottles that are plastic.

So this is me, signing out.

My name is ocean without a doubt.





TREE AT NIGHT BY MARY MAURICE-PHILLIPS
DAUGHTER OF VIV MAURICE



ARTWORK BY MARY MAURICE-PHILLIPS
DAUGHTER OF VIV MAURICE



"CLARA IS THE ME, MYSELF AND ROB ARE MUM AND DAD AND OUR NEW PUPPY BARNABY IS THE DOG!" BY CLARA-JAYNE KELLY AGE 8, DAUGHTER OF AMANDA-JAYNE DOHERTY



GABRIELA HUGHES AGE 8, DAUGHTER OF EAMONN HUGHES



SAARJAN AND JENSON 5 MONTH OLD TWIN GRANDSONS OF BHO THIND

MY FAMILY TRADITION AT CHRISTMAS: UNMISSABLE MOMENTS AND TIME TRAVEL



BY ABIMBOLA APALARA

Christmas is a season every one of us is excited about and looks forward to in my family; the crisp and cold mornings, cosy pyjamas, and early morning stocking filler presents are memories captured both in my mind and on camera.

'Sarah, have you seen the parcels delivered by Santa?' Emily was beaming with excitement, the smile on her face as wide as the ocean as she pulled Sarah down the stairs.

Last night when we went to bed, I was peeping to see if and when Mr Claus would climb down the chimney. Emily is the bright star of the family; she gets easily excited, and her face will light up the greatest bonfire. On the other hand, Sarah is as gentle as the stream, calm, cool, and calculated. It is not as if she is not excited; she, however, can conceal that cleverly and find a way to enjoy her toys. The two sisters are very fond of each other and can barely play together for some time without the usual sibling squabbles. 'Emily and Sarah, I was hoping you could help me with preparing the dinner for tonight. We have a lot to cook, the turkey takes around four hours, and we must start early enough to have enough time to watch our favourite Christmas movie after dinner.'

'Yes Mummy, we will be your little elves,' chorused the two sisters. 'I am setting up the video over at this corner to get the wide-angle and capture the moments because I wouldn't want to miss any part of the unwrapping and those delightful reactions,' said Mr Mahoney in his baritone voice.

Mr Mahoney is the head of the family and, each year, he is the happy camera and video man, capturing all the favourite reactions expected and unexpected. For a few years, Mr Mahoney will hold the camera and later realise he was missing from many shots as he was always behind the camera. A tiny frame is what I manage to capture with me holding the camera and pointing to my dear husband with a slight grin on my face, whispering, 'He has been here all along; behold the face of the king of the manor.' Everyone burst into a frenzy of laughter.

He was a bit camera shy, but as the family captures the moments of unwrapping our Christmas gifts each year, my husband has come to appreciate the significance of capturing memorable occasions. We may not be able to recreate or rewind the hands of time, but these family Christmas videos have become our time machine.

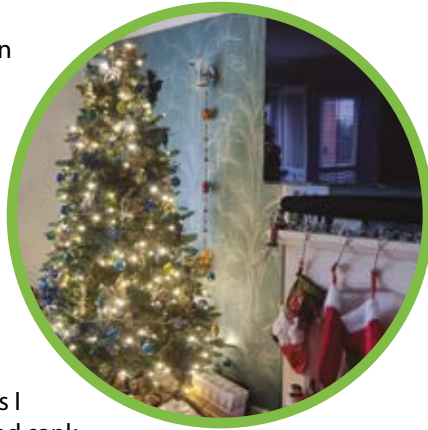
Turkey has been prepped and most vegetables diced; we can put those away and get started with Christmas breakfast. The children are super obedient at this time because all they can think about is opening their Christmas present sitting in our cosy living room with the soothing crackle noise from the fireplace. Our Christmas breakfast is set, a full English breakfast enjoyed with coffee and tea while still in our Christmas PJs. We make sure to take our Christmas videos in our PJs, so buying new Christmas pyjamas is a must.

We make sure each year we add more Christmas tableware and Christmas decorations to our collection. I especially look forward to grabbing the best bargains after Christmas. You may be surprised that my Christmas shopping for the next year often begins at the Boxing Day sale through January. This year, Emily and Sarah longed for a new Nintendo Switch game and console; it was the latest toy any child wanted that year. Even though they have another Nintendo console, it was a Nintendo Switch, or nothing else would do. As parents, we want to make our family happy and united during the season. Although many people look forward to reuniting with family at Christmas, it can also be a time when some people may be apprehensive, and others can be tense. We have different family memories, and the festive season can trigger a flood of emotions for many people. I have chosen to keep many positive memories and try my best to delete the negative and hurtful ones. Rubbing his two hands together, Mr Mahoney signifies it's time to start opening the Christmas presents. Sarah and Emily have tried their best to be good girls and did all they could to avoid being listed on Santa's naughty list. The famous Santa's list is one of the helpful parental tools for children; it seems to make children obedient and a delight, especially when Christmas is around the corner.



'If the dishes aren't done, your name will go on Santa's list,' Emily whispered. 'Oh no, I have a long list and would not want to miss Santa's special presents.' Bang! Clash! are the noises heard in the kitchen. In a jiffy, the dishes are sparkling and shining. 'Phew!' sighed Sarah.

My husband and I wondered how we have made our children take Santa's gift so seriously. One year, Santa was almost not stopping at our house, but he managed to drop a promise note to one of our girls that he had asked Mummy and Daddy to purchase the gift and deliver it right after Christmas. That year, as you all may have guessed, Santa's workshop did not have the right colour of bike Emily requested. That note was treasured and still a topic of discussion whenever we remember; you can imagine the smile and wink from us.



I had quickly finished my toast and gulped my drink as fast as I could to get the best seat with the best camera focus; I sat and sank into the couch flanked on each side by my precious princesses. Who wants to go first? 'Me! Me Mummy,' said Sarah.

That was unusual, she is not the type to go first, but this time she asked, although Emily also wants to go first. What a dilemma, and in the spirit of not wanting any tears, we agreed Sarah goes first but only opens one gift and then Emily next, so they get to alternate rather than wait for one of them to open all her gifts. Both girls sat on the floor in the middle of the living room with a pile high of boxes. They have scrambled to pick out their gifts with the broadest grin on their faces under our seven and a half feet tall Christmas tree decorated with golden and peach accessories.

As I sat back looking at them, I treasured each memory being created, knowing our jolly little angels would soon grow up fast, and Santa's charm will wane. These precious moments are crucial and must not be missed, it is our family tradition, and we hold it close to our hearts.

'This one is a small present from Grandma; I wonder what may be in it!' 'Mine looks like a book, and it's from Santa,' said Emily. 'I hope Santa isn't asking me to read more books,' said Sarah, feeling encumbered. One by one, the gifts were categorised by our girls, and it was time to start opening them, Yippee!

'Shuffle to the left, no turn to the right, no I can't see you,' said Dad. 'Am I ok here too?' not wanting to get out of shot. All set now, we can begin the big reveal. Sarah opened her first gift from Grandma, a small box with earrings.

'Are they real gold?' chuckled Emily. 'Yes they are real gold and I love them.' 'It's my turn; which one should I open first?' Emily fiddling her fingers and being cheeky. 'I'll start with this one; at least I can get the idea of getting a book from Santa out of the way.' Swiftly her face lit up as she unwrapped the present; in a whiz, it's a Nintendo game. Emily had a puzzled look for a moment. I thought fast and could sense she was trying to understand why she would receive a Nintendo Switch game; indeed, it may not work with the existing Nintendo U console. With the excitement in the air, she quickly moved on to see Sarah's next gift.

'Surprise! I also got another Nintendo Switch game; Then the dots started connecting, both girls looked for the next item that looked like a book and could not care whose it was, they both opened it, and it was another Nintendo Switch game. Bursting in pure joy and excitement, I could not capture their facial expression with words, but it was as if they had struck gold.

'We have three Nintendo Switch games. This means there must be a Nintendo Switch console somewhere,' they said simultaneously. Suddenly the neatly piled gifts came crashing down while they were both looking for the gift that was likely to be the console. I can never forget this experience; I'm so glad we captured it on video. It was so memorable that we kept talking about that moment for a while that year.

All of a sudden, I felt so proud that, as parents, we were able to bring excitement and joy into the lives of our children. Memories are the only thing that last and cannot be taken away. It is vital to create and hold onto great memories because they were the lifeline when life challenges and battles arose, and it seems one may be in a place that no one else can get to see. Memories are great to help feel loved and give hope that things can be great again. So, take time to build beautiful memories with your family; they are priceless. Kaboom! 'We found it!' Both jumping hysterically and promising to be good children so Santa can keep fulfilling their wishes.

Sarah and Emily were nine and seven years old that Christmas. Now my girls are teenagers, and I have a dilemma of what gifts Santa can drop through the chimney to create such excitement for these excellent and intelligent teenagers next Christmas. I want to guess Santa's teenager's Christmas gift has become a hens' tooth. We have resorted to watching our family Christmas unwrapping videos to recapture these beautiful moments, memories and musings while Mr Mahoney and I sit on a cosy couch and look forward to beautiful and lasting moments together.





ARTWORK BY JOSEPH O'BRIEN AGE 4
SON OF JANN-LOUISE DEASY



SPIDER MAN CREW BY MANAV
SON OF JATINDER SAHNI, AGE 12

ZARA
DAUGHTER OF
AGNIESZKA WENSLEY



ENGLISH SHAKESPEAREAN SONNET: FOOTBALL'S COMING HOME!

BY ABISHAWN THAYAPARAN AGE 14

I woke up with excitement: today is the day!
Oh why did I have to go to school for?
All England fans are on their knees to pray.
I hope the scoreline is zero to four.
There are seventy-thousand fans live at Wembley.
Here comes the heroes led by Harry Kane.
We can see them all with pride on TV.
Roar of the crowd makes the Danes go insane.
Denmark has scored one, what a crying shame.
The fans are distorted, Pickford let it in.
But suddenly England is back in the game.
Come on England we are certain you win.
We jumped off the sofa - England have won!
A great game for England, this day is done.



ARTWORK BY TREY AGE 10,
SON OF HUYEN LAU

FAMILY HOLIDAY

BY JENNIFER ABIDI

Climbing Ben Nevis was challenging but rewarding at the same time. It was such an achievement when we reached the top of the highest mountain in Scotland and seeing the remains of the observatory. We had been hiking for a few years, which has really helped our mental wellbeing.



As we were not able to travel abroad, we decided to take a road trip around Scotland's North Coast 500. This is something we wanted to do but never got around to doing. The scenery was out of this world, the mountains were breathtaking, it was just what we needed to forget for a moment everything that was going on in the world.



This is a beautiful beach called Sango Sands. We spent a few hours here kayaking, and managed to even see seals. I love animals, so to see seals up close was the best part!



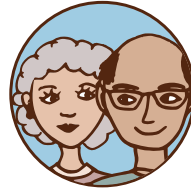
This picture was taken in 2018 when we had a short break in Wales. I love this picture because I never thought we actually had places like this in the UK. Absolutely stunning place. The best thing about this place is that it is secluded, so not much people were there.





HOW TO AGE WELL

BY SUSAN SAUNDERS, HEALTH COACH



As we get older, juggling family demands and responsibilities can take a lot of energy and leave us feeling depleted. But we need to keep healthy so we can look after others. It's a cliché, but remember when you're on a plane and you're told to put your oxygen mask on first before helping others? The same applies when it comes to looking after our health: sometimes we have to focus on ourselves before we can take care of our families.

Here are ten science-based practices which will help you keep healthy – and able to care for your family – as the years go by.

- 1 **Know your purpose:** having a sense of purpose gets you out of bed in the morning and gives meaning to your world. Understand what you want from life. Visualise it, write it down and carry it in your mind's eye.
- 2 **Eat SMASH fish at least twice a week:** DHA and EPA from omega-3 fatty acids found in SMASH (sardine, mackerel, anchovies, salmon, herring) fish are vital for brain health – there's a strong correlation between eating oily fish and thinking clearly in older adults. Tinned sardines (bones and all, for calcium) are an inexpensive age-well superfood.
- 3 **Don't fret about supplements:** studies suggest most don't work, with the exception of Vitamin D, which has been repeatedly linked to a better brain, bone and mental health, not to mention a better chance of recovering from COVID-19.
- 4 **Aim for seven portions of vegetables and fruit a day:** replace junk food with green and brightly-coloured vegetables and fruits. Phytonutrients (the biochemicals found in plants) are vital for our health, providing essential nutrients and fermentable fibre, beloved by our gut microbiota.

- 5 **Ten mins of weight/resistance training every day:** building and maintaining muscle is vital – and about so much more than staying strong. Muscle has been linked to improved cell function, reduced inflammation, (a hallmark of ageing), better cognition and slower bone loss.
- 6 **Raise your heart rate:** get moving every day, aiming to feel a little breathless. Mix it up, the more variety the better. And move every hour, even if it's just to stretch at your desk. Our sedentary, work-bound lives are killing us.
- 7 **Get outside in the morning:** morning light, within an hour of waking, helps set the circadian 'clock' which dictates our sleep/wake cycle. A good night's sleep starts in the morning. Bonus points if you exercise outside.
- 8 **Have a sleep/rise routine:** as we get older our circadian clocks become disrupted and a second clock develops, fragmenting our sleep. 'Anchor' your body clock by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day.
- 9 **Turn off your phone and read a book:** a Yale study found book readers live almost two years longer than non-readers. Reading books leads to greater cognitive engagement and emotional intelligence; reading before bed reduces stress, helping us sleep more soundly (unlike phone scrolling).
- 10 **Invest in chemical-free beauty and cleaning products:** all too often our homes harbour outside air pollution and inside contaminants. Review the number of chemical cleaners you use, particularly sprays, and switch to organic, natural beauty products – your whole family will benefit.

SIMILARLY DIFFERENT

BY AMANDA MANKELOW

Aunts, uncles, second cousins twice removed,
Stepsisters, half brothers, cats and dogs,
Laughter, sadness and feuds defused,
Bathroom mirrors steamed up with fog.

Mums, dads and grandparents together,
Multiple generations under one roof.
Raw emotions, storms to be weathered,
Opinions offered, cries, shouts and woofs.

Morning routines a military operation,
This could be anyone, you or me.
Different activities, schedules, portions,
Bad habits, good habits, wants and needs.

Family develops, extends and diminishes,
However challenging, tiring or noisy,
We are grateful and love them, right down to the fishes.
When all's said and done families tend to be cosy.

Mine isn't like yours and yours not like theirs.
It's not like it was back in history.
There might be divorce, remarriage, affairs,
It might be chaotic or 'normal' blissfully.

Love lost, love found, estrangement and tension,
Staggered bedtimes and wake-ups, pick ups and drop offs,
And it won't get done if you forget to mention,
Calendars, to do lists, a spot in the loft.

Nothing spontaneous, nothing by chance,
Every minute filled, no time to rest.
The next task is waiting, if you give your watch a glance,
But do we ever give our best?

Silence is golden, silence is creepy,
When I do stop to think I know what I need
I admire the independence, I'd just get weepy
If it was just me, no one to feed.

We are all different, our stories, our past,
Our family unit is just what it is.
Don't judge over there, the present won't last.
It could be you tomorrow, hers becomes his.

Don't try to be something you're not.
Don't go comparing, if it's right then you'll know.
No point pretending, this could be your 'lot'.
These are your folks wherever you go.

Thanks for your kind words and your home truths,
But I'm standing firm, I will not be moved.
You might think it's odd, problematic, has flaws -
Let me worry about that and you deal with yours!



FAMILY

BY SOPHIA IERODIACONOU

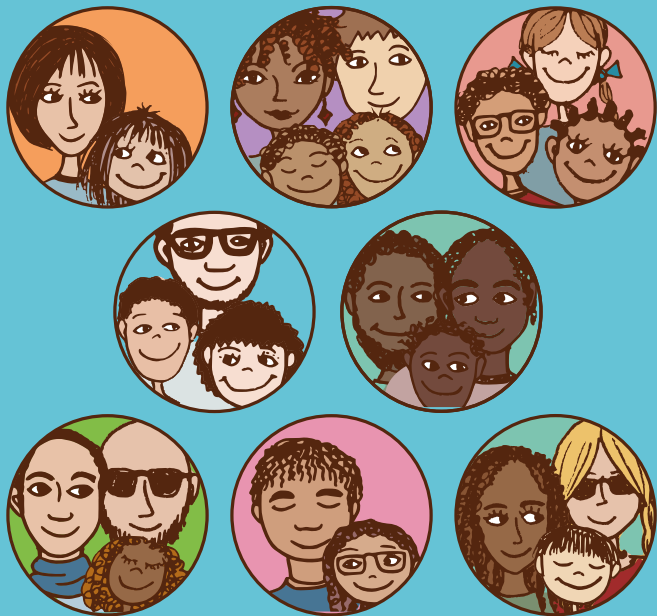
Frequent trips to the GP.
An array of toys, clothes, and shoes everywhere!
Morphing into your mother without realising.
Immerse myself in household chores while planning what's for dinner?
Lounging around on the sofa
Yawn, another day is done.



EIGHT PRACTICES OF SUPPORTIVE PARENTS

BY KAM TAJ, PERFORMANCE COACH

- 1 WARMTH AND STRUCTURE/PREDICTABILITY = LOVING FOUNDATIONS
- 2 BEHAVIOUR VS IDENTITY — CHOOSE YOUR WORDS WISELY
- 3 SELF-TALK — OUR SELF-TALK BECOMES THEIR SELF-TALK
- 4 GIVE SPACE
- 5 AVAILABILITY — 'POTTED-PLANT PARENTS'
- 6 ASK, DON'T ASSUME — HOW CAN I SUPPORT YOU BEST RIGHT NOW?
- 7 I LOVE, RESPECT AND TRUST YOU — SHOW AND TELL
- 8 INHERITANCE — LET THEM INHERIT YOUR LOVE, NOT YOUR FEAR



UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY DURING TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

BY DIANA CHACCOUR, ART PSYCHOTHERAPIST

One of the common themes I am encountering in therapy is the overwhelming sense of social expectation to surpass oneself during the lockdown period and somehow the pressure of having to use this time as a unique opportunity to become better individuals. As if anxiety wasn't high enough, some individuals are already experiencing a real sense of shame and fear of having failed the chance to be more productive (e.g. learn Latin, play the viola, make sourdough bread and paint a masterpiece). Hence, when experimenting with a new hobby gets a place in the daily to-do list, anxiety will inevitably increase whilst pleasure and enjoyment go downhill.

Art can help unlock difficult feelings and reconnect with oneself. Whilst art can certainly be used in the context of psychotherapy as a tool of communication and self-expression, it has also proven to be an effective therapy for the purpose of wellbeing reinforcement and self-nurturing. When used purposelessly, as a mindful strategy, as a way of reconnecting with oneself, as an emotional offloading tool during moments of doubt or as a way of grounding and unwinding.

During challenging moments of uncertainty, art can be the welcomed visitor that can help, unlocking difficult feelings, externalising them and giving them shape so they can be revealed to us. And, within that new vision, meaning and knowledge can also emerge, helping us cope with what could otherwise feel seemingly incomprehensible and confusing. Art making also engages the body and helps us find connections that bypass cognitive processes in which we tend to be absorbed, engaging the senses and leading to better integration with our surroundings and ourselves.

Simplicity is always the best starting point. I always insist on the magic of the principle of exposure: it doesn't matter how you start as long as you do it now. Don't wait until your Amazon delivery comes with a full supply of art materials and tools. Grab a pen and take the anxiety, low mood or worry for a ride on a blank surface of paper, far beyond, to the withering heights of the unconscious, and give yourself permission to embrace the journey.

NO ONE FORESAW A PANDEMIC

BY YERUSALEM GEBRU

No one foresaw a pandemic, but COVID really brought about so many changes in our lives. From being placed in lockdown, to home schooling to keeping fit with Joe Wicks and so on. Some we appreciate and some we dread.

In this challenging time to see Peabody's involvement in making sure that staff are supported in every way possible is really appreciated. Through the Family Network, my son received a board game (Scrabble); this bought a time where we as a family were able to enjoy ourselves even by staying at home. It was really fun, my son even came up with words that relate to the current situation we are going through.

During this time Family Network also arranged for us to talk with a health expert, which I enjoyed, and it was really helpful knowing that others were having a similar experience trying to cope with all the unexpected changes and trying to achieve a healthy work/life balance.



ASIA BARROWES, DAUGHTER
OF STEPHANIE FRANCIS



SISTER

BY LOU TRELEAVEN

You and me, we're family.
We share a branch, part of the tree.
We're in the albums, every page,
The moments frozen as we age.

From baby pics with dimpled chins,
To fashion fails and style sins,
From formal shots in uniform,
To garden snow fights, wrapped up warm.

From pictures of the crew and cast
To sports day races, running fast,
To holidays with cousins dear,
The usual suspects every year.

But most of all, we form a pair,
One slim and dark, one small and fair,
In dressing up clothes, pushing prams,
Arms interlinked or holding hands.

From black-and-white to technicolour,
All these moments with each other.
All those times we gladly stopped,
Then ran back to the world we'd dropped.

I'd like to stay there for a while
And live those days and smile that smile.
Those times have rushed away like sand.
It's further now to reach your hand.

And further now for us than ever,
Crossing lands to be together,
Waiting for that moment when
We're reunited in a frame.



FAMILY OF THREE

BY IRENE-MARY ADEYINKA

Me, my mum, and my sis, three women you could never miss.
Support for each other was unwavering, even when wars were raging.
We have our own language; only we understand.
We eat together, usually at Bella Italia.
We have journeyed across many lands.
We celebrate each other for every achievement.
When three became two, we still remember and honour each other.
How lucky are we to experience love without condition?
This is what family means to me.





THE POWER OF CONNECTION

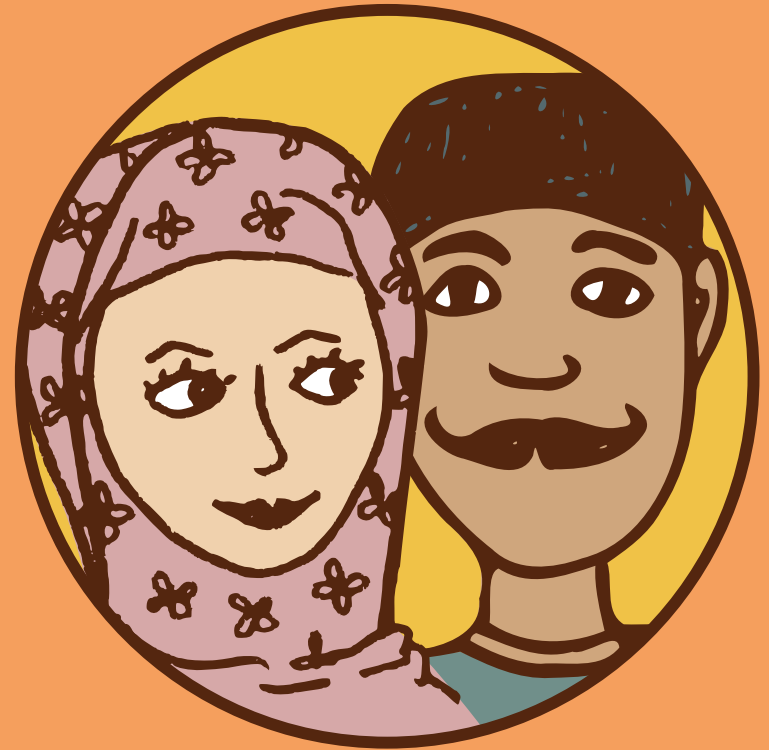
BY MARY TAYLOR, HEAD OF PROGRAMMES, FAMILY LINKS CENTRE

Our emotional health is made up of our ability to look after ourselves, to manage ourselves in times of challenge and to sustain healthy relationships. We are social beings, and we need each other in order to thrive. People instinctively recognise the need to connect and the small acts of kindness can build into something really powerful.

We will all have had a different experience of the pandemic, with some suffering unbearable losses, some facing the challenges of a complex family life, others left on their own to manage anxiety or worry, and many exhausted from the crashing together of home and work lives as they try to fulfil the demands of a job, being a parent/carer and even a teacher.

I encourage you all to remember the need to look after yourselves, to 'put your own oxygen mask on first' as we cannot pour from an empty jug. When you do finally come together again as a team, take the time to mark this coming together, to acknowledge what has happened in your work community, to celebrate the many successes you will have had in continuing to make a real difference to many individual lives and to reconnect with each other. This will mean building in some new routines to support you with regaining your working relationships, whether that is taking time to be playful together, having regular work breaks, making each other cups of tea or coffee, setting up a 'bring and share' lunch, checking in with each other, or reflecting together on the particular experiences you have shared.

Giving and receiving kindness is good for our mental, emotional and physical health and we shouldn't underestimate the power of taking time to connect kindly with others. It is in such simple gestures that we can rebuild trust and give each other hope.



TAKE THE TIME TO CONNECT KINDLY WITH OTHERS

LIGHT OF OUR LIFE

BY AMY JANDU

It only seems like yesterday we made this beautiful creation, the whole family had fun making this together, keeping busy during Covid.

We couldn't stop looking at it - it was beautiful!

Mum was so excited to see the potato faces - the look on her face was amazing!

Lights glistening, warm and glowing with potato faces smiling.

Made me think - life is like a light!

No one knows when it will go out.

When it goes you wish you had spent more time nurturing it and enjoying it.

Life is like a light - admire, nurture and enjoy it while it lasts.

When the light goes - light changes!

Wishing we had spent more time admiring its beauty, warmth and kept it burning for longer.

Love life, care for others and enjoy the moments while the light is still shining.

Don't know when the light will go out.

"A CREATION WITH POTATO CARVINGS FOR OUR DIWALI CELEBRATIONS - CREATED BY MY ELDERLY MUM AND DAUGHTER." AMY JANDU



JACK'S SEVENTH BIRTHDAY SURPRISE PARTY

BY FIONA MURRAY



I have lived alone for many years as my three children have flown the nest, but in September last year, my eldest daughter returned home with her partner, six year old son Jack and a new baby on the way, after living in Barcelona for many years. Their plan was to settle back into the UK, Ben to work with his cousin who has his own building business, save some money to be able to get their own place and settle into the UK. Unfortunately, it has all gone wrong. My daughter Sarah developed gestational diabetes and had to have a planned Caesarean to bring her daughter Poppy into the world. Christmas came and went as the new baby settled in and Jack was accustomed to being schooled in England.

I was diagnosed with cancer in my right kidney in April 2019 and am currently under Kings College Hospital receiving ongoing care. This is my second turn of having cancer as I had it in my left kidney in 2016, so having a houseful again has been a real challenge in itself and I haven't been the happiest of mums to come home to! I have had to adjust to having four extra family members living with me and dealing with my emotions concerning my kidneys... then it happened! Coronavirus reared its ugly head in the UK and all of our lives have changed and all our plans have been put on hold. I have had to accustom myself to working from home, setting up a workstation in my bedroom as that's my only quiet place, I had received a letter from NHS England telling me I am under their twelve week shielding programme, so I have been unable to leave my home for fourteen weeks now as it got extended. I have had to adapt to online shopping for groceries

as my family is still too wary to go to supermarkets. This has produced many challenges as I am so used to providing for myself and having the freedom to work and shop as these things had to be done for me now and I lost a bit of my independence.

Ben couldn't work due to the lockdown restrictions, plus being able to source and buy plaster was impossible, a bit like it was for us all with toilet paper and pasta! Jack had only just adjusted himself to being schooled in England and catching up with his peers. Now he is being home schooled by Sarah. My granddaughter Poppy is eight months old now and is missing out on being with other babies her age.

Sadly we have had two deaths in my family. My uncle passed away on Easter Sunday and Ben's uncle the following Friday, and I know there have been thousands of other deaths, but when it's in your family it's very difficult. My grandson Jack had his seventh birthday on 20th June and my daughter had organised a surprise party for him. Due to me shielding, the party was being held in a friend's garden and it was managed really well with guests arriving and leaving at allocated time slots to stay within the government's guidelines as to how many people could meet up outdoors.

I had been successful in my application for some funding from The Family Fund, which I had read about on the POD. They were offering staff the opportunity to be granted some money for a special treat for their family to bring a bit of happiness during the lockdown. I was able to choose and buy some lovely items online to add to the party fun. I bought some small toys and sweets to go inside the pinata and a couple of games for Jack.

I have added two lovely pictures that sum up exactly what it felt like for Jack to be out and having a garden party on his seventh birthday. He had a lovely time bouncing and playing in the foam pool. I was unable to go to the party but loved hearing all about it and seeing all the wonderful pictures. The Family Fund made Jack's party feel extra special as they recognised that staff had family that could do with a little pick me up, which it certainly did, so thank you so much for your kindness.

My daughter has flown the nest again and moved to Manchester to form her 'bubble' with Ben's family, so this party was extra special as it has left me with lovely warm happy feelings... as one family moved out another family moved in! I discovered a hedgehog nest in my garden and on peeping inside I was delighted to find a mum with her five baby hoglets... but that's another story to come that I will share with you all soon.

SEASONS OF FAMILY

BY SHEILA KAIJUKA

The hundreds of steps of family experiences that walk us into the opportunities that we now explore today. Family members, past and present, whose footprint and existence map and knit our lives together to form the elaborate tapestry that we now put on display.

The autumn of Auntie Hilda who nags us all the way into tackling our bad manners and into straightening our maddening ways until the world is happy with what she has weeded out and her with our conduct. It is out of exhaustion that you change, if only to keep her silent.

Then there is the eye of Mama Eva's thrifty handling of finances that could challenge any analyst, assets, liabilities and home expenses. It is the way she could eye the market stalls and walk up and down for any deal. She woke up at unholy hours of the night to drive to the meat market to clench the best wholesale prices to feed her family. Always with a spare tenner under the bed, the unsung hero could stretch it as far as it could possibly go. The memory is never forgotten by her children.

The winter of death of loved ones; brothers' lives snatched away too soon and whose genetic line is forever lost. The heartbreak that never ends. The hypertension that always rears its head in every generation, grim reaping a few at a time. For those left behind, it leaves a cold misery. Then comes the spring of hope that Cousin Frank will finally stop telling his lies. Perhaps then one of his actual abilities would be able to surface and grace the world.

And then lastly the summer when everything blossoms and blooms and the produce doubles. Two babies, two nappies, two doctors' appointments, two sets of baby bottles, two spaces in the nursery and a parent outnumbered. Then the summer weddings; where Gloria finally got married and the parents will not be outdone in their display of magnificence. The whole world is invited, whether known or unknown to the happy couple. Aunties, uncles, cousins, parents, grandparents, neighbours, acquaintances are everywhere; first, second, third, fourth and always removed and no penny is spared, not today, as it is collected from family for family and the celebration is launched!

And with this glimpse, continues the cycle of seasons and family...



BOTTLE ARTWORK
BY SHEILA'S CHILDREN

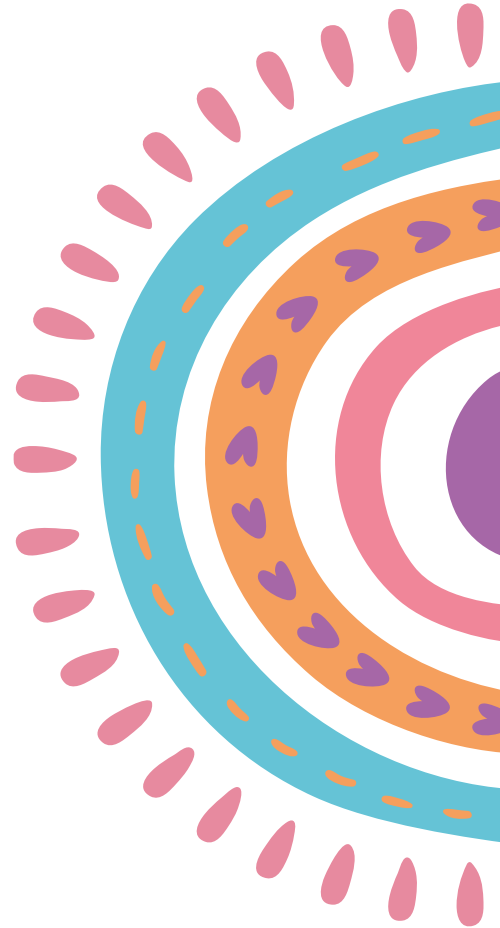
GRATEFUL IN SPITE OF IT

BY AMANDA MANKELOW

Forget the bad, forget the sad,
The last few months have been mad.
Lives lost, lives halted.
Fears raging, tempers fraying.
Windows opened, doors bolted.
New phrases, distance paying.
But....

Kindness shown, kisses blown,
Phone calls, meals made,
Time taken, gratitude shown,
Small things, simple acts,
Counting blessings, not the facts.
Home schooling, home working.
Hard decisions, knowing best
So....

Easy does it, do remember,
Small steps, no rush,
Bright August, dark December,
The stronger, the hurting,
More uncertainty is starting.
Is it over? Dare we dream?
The world shaken by what it's seen,
Not over there in a far-off land,
But here, right here, in my hand.
No prisoners, no warning,
Love and loss, and pain outpouring.



FAMILY LIFE

BY SOPHIA IERODIACONOU

I remember the long hot summers, sunbathing under the warm Mediterranean sun. Walking with you side by side and the sweet smell of freshly cut grass in the morning.

And, then it became three, you brought home my new daddy. I wasn't sure about him at first, but he grew on me, he bought me loads of toys to play with.

Suddenly, you started to look different; your belly has gotten bigger and you're eating a lot more than you used to.

What?!? I can't believe what you're telling me - I'm going to have a brother! I promise I will look after him, feed him and take him out for walks every day! And I promise to protect him as it's my job as the older sister.

Tick, tock, tick, tock

Where are they? What's taking them so long? They've been gone ages!

Door handle turning.

They're here, they're here!

I can't believe my brother is here, but what is this?? Aargh, too much noise!

Aargh, feed him, burp him, take him back! Do something, Mummy!

Ah, silence.

I peer over and see my brother sleeping in his cot. I've changed my mind now, we can keep him, he's kind of cute.

Aargh, he's crying again. Mum!





FAMILY NETWORK COOK-ALONG

A collection of delicious plant-based recipes by Sharon Gardner, Plant-based Nutritionist and Holistic Chef at Made in Hackney, a Community Cookery School. We had fun virtual cook-along sessions that taught us how to use new and healthier ingredients and we made them together with plenty of giggles and laughter.

"It was a great session to explore alternative diets, we really enjoyed cooking together and my son got to experience things he hasn't done previously. I will definitely be cooking more with him as he loved the session. Thank you for making me take time out of my busy day to enjoy this session." Kate Poyser

"I never knew I would love cooking so much, I want to do it more, the food was nice and I got to do things I haven't done before. I want to do it again." Vincent, 10 years old and son of Kate.



FAMILY COOKING

BY ABISHAWN, AGE 13, AND AYISHAON THAYAPARAN, AGE 12

We all had family fun trying to cook.
It's worth noting that we didn't need the book.
We took a few pictures, you should have a look.
It's interesting the ingredients we took.

We had help from Sharon on Zoom.
As we ran around the room.
We tasted the food with delight.
So tasty, what a bite!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A VEGAN TO EAT PLANTS!

BY SHARON GARDNER, PLANT-BASED NUTRITIONIST AND HOLISTIC CHEF

There are many benefits to adopting a more plant-based diet, particularly a whole-food plant-based one (foods that have not been or are minimally processed). As well as being a rich source of fibre, which we need to eat more of to maintain a healthy heart and digestive system, these foods are also rich in a variety of nutrients including everything from vitamin A to Zinc!

You don't have to be a vegan to eat more plants, you just need to be a little creative! For example, if like me you enjoy a hot bowl of steaming porridge for breakfast on a winter's day by making your porridge with water, then adding oat or coconut milk before serving you have a complete plant-based breakfast. The same applies to your favourite cereal. Just swap the animal milk to any variety of plant-based ones out there and as long as your cereal does not include animal sources you have another plant-based breakfast.

My favourite breakfast to eat when I have more time over a weekend is fully loaded pancakes (see recipe below): a stack of scotch-sized pancakes topped with caramelised bananas or apples with a serving of coconut yoghurt and an extra drizzle of maple syrup! However, as this is quite high in calories, this type of breakfast is more of an occasional treat.

When it comes to your regular meals, there are many options available to you. Swapping out the meat for lentils to make a shepherd's or cottage pie filled with a variety of veggies is more than filling and can be enjoyed by the whole family. Lentils are also great in veggie Bolognese sauces, pies, stews and curries. And chickpeas are a great alternative too, in everything from chickpea curries, Moroccan stews, falafel and hummus to sandwiches (if you didn't know chickpeas are the new tuna)!

Plant-based eating is about how much of the foods you eat are from plant-based sources and have not been processed. There are many benefits to eating a more plant-based diet, not only for our health and wellbeing but also for the environment. Did you know that eating a plant-based meal once a week could save the equivalent of driving over 1100 miles!

QUESADILLAS WITH REFRIED BEANS AND NO CHEESE SAUCE

SERVES 2-4

FLATBREAD

(serves 2)

Ingredients

1 medium sweet potato (roughly 150 grams)
150-200 grams of plain flour (if gluten-free you'll need to adjust flour accordingly)

Method

1. Peel and cut the potato into bite-size pieces, place into a medium size pot on the stove with enough water to cover the potatoes, bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for 10-15 minutes until soft.
2. Put the sweet potatoes into a large bowl mash and leave to cool completely. Once cooled add half of the flour and mix in well with a spoon or spatula. Using clean hands begin bringing the dough together, adding more flour until you have a soft but not sticky dough. Cover and leave to one side until ready to cook.
3. Roll the dough into a sausage-like shape, cut into 4 then roll each piece into a ball, lightly flour a clean surface and roll each piece into a thin circle of equal sizes.
4. Heat a large frying pan on a medium heat (do not add any oil). Once the pan is heated sufficiently, add one of the flatbreads to the pan and allow to cook for about 2 minutes, until the middle begins to puff up and the edges turn golden brown. Flip over and continue to cook for another 1 minute until golden brown on the other side.
5. Place cooked flatbread into a clean dishcloth, wrap and leave to one side whilst you finish off cooking the rest of them.

REFRIED BEANS

(serves 3-4)

Ingredients

1 tablespoon of olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 can/tin of organic (pinto, black, or kidney) beans drained and rinsed (or 1 and a half cup of cooked beans)
1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon of smoked paprika
2 teaspoons of tamari sauce (fermented soya sauce)
Freshly ground black pepper
Season to taste if needed
Optional - 2 tablespoons of chopped fresh coriander or parsley

Method

1. Heat the oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onions and cook until tender for about 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic, cayenne pepper and paprika and cook for a further 1 minute. Add the beans and tamari and leave for about 5 minutes.
2. Once the beans are cooked through, mash with the back of a wooden spoon or fork, coarsely so that the beans still have some texture. Add a little more olive oil, black pepper and the herbs if using, taste and adjust the seasoning if needed.

NO CHEESE SAUCE

Ingredients

180 millilitres of coconut milk in a can (try to get one with little to no additives in)
2 tablespoons of tapioca flour or arrowroot or cornflour
1/2 teaspoon of onion powder
1/4 teaspoon of garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon of smoked paprika
1/4 teaspoon of sea salt
20 grams of nutritional yeast flakes
Optional tin of sweet corn, and salad (cucumbers, baby tomatoes, lettuce etc.)

Method

1. Put all the ingredients into a saucepan and whisk well. Once everything is combined, turn on the heat and slowly bring the mixture to a boil while stirring constantly.
2. Turn the heat down and leave the mixture to simmer for about a minute or so until the sauce is stretchy. Use as cheese sauce inside the quesadilla, or with pasta or with nachos.

ASSEMBLING THE QUESADILLAS

Method

1. Spread some of the cheese sauce over one of the flatbreads evenly, then add some of the refried beans and sweet corn. Place another flatbread on top.
2. Lightly oil a heavy bottom frying pan, heat on medium-high, place the quesadilla in the pan and cook for 2-3 minutes. Brush the top with a little oil, flip over and cook until golden brown on the other side.
3. Cut into 4 pieces and enjoy with a side salad.



THE FOLLOWING RECIPES WERE CREATED TO CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH.

CHICKPEA AND POTATO CURRY



Ingredients

1 tin or carton of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
2 – 3 medium potatoes (or a large sweet potato) peeled if not organic, or skin washed well and scrubbed if organic
1/4 packet of creamed coconut
1/2 can of full fat coconut milk
1 medium onion, diced
2 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tablespoon of Caribbean curry powder
1/4 teaspoon of turmeric
1/4 teaspoon of black pepper
Fresh coriander – optional
Season to taste

Method

1. Begin prepping all the ingredients ready to cook. Dice the onions, finely chop up the garlic or mince. Peel potatoes (if not organic) and cut into small squares, a little bigger than the chickpeas. Measure out the water into a jug. Prepare the seasonings by measuring out each spice and placing them into a small dish. Finally, grate or cut the creamed coconut into small pieces or measure out the coconut milk. Rinse off the chickpeas (you can reserve the water to use in recipes that call for aquafaba).

2. Next, heat a little oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook for about 2 minutes. Now add the curry powder, turmeric and black pepper to the pan and stir through. Now add the potatoes to the pan and mix until seasonings coat all the pieces. Now add the creamed coconut or coconut milk from the tin and water and mix well. Bring to a boil,

then reduce heat and place a lid on the pan and leave to simmer for 15 minutes.

3. After 15 minutes, remove the lid and add the chickpeas, and cook for a further 5 minutes or so, if the sauce is too thick add a little more water. Taste, and if needed season to taste, and stir through. Chop up and add the coriander if using. Serve with rice, or flatbreads and green steamed veggies.



PLANTAIN

A CARIBBEAN DISH IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT A SIDE OF THESE!

Ingredients

1 large or 2 medium yellow but firm plantain
A little oil for baking

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180c/160c fan/gas mark 5. Have a baking tray ready.

2. Peel the plantain, by cutting off both ends and gently run the knife down the side to remove the rest of the skin being careful not to cut too deep as you do not want to cut into the flesh. Slice the plantain on a diagonal, medium thickness, so that they are more oval-shaped than round and evenly sized, for baking.

3. Lightly grease a baking tray with a little oil so that the plantains do not stick when baking, place the slices on the tray ensuring to coat both sides with the oil, then place into the oven and bake for about 10 minutes until golden brown then flip over and continue to cook for another 5 minutes until golden brown on both sides.



CARIBBEAN 'NAKED' SLAW

A GREAT MAYO FREE COMPLEMENT

SERVES 4-6

Ingredients

1/2 a red or white cabbage medium sized cabbage - or a mixture of both
1 large or 2 medium carrots, washed (and peeled if not organic)
2 - 3 spring onions, washed well to remove any dirt
Small handful of fresh coriander – optional rinsed well
4 tablespoons of olive oil
2 tablespoons of apple cider or red wine vinegar
2 teaspoons of sweetener of choice
Freshly ground black pepper
Optional – small piece of fresh ginger

Method

1. Cut the cabbage in half and remove the hard root at the bottom. Place the flat side onto your chopping board and begin slicing into thin strips until all the cabbage has been used up. Rinse in a colander under water, then pat dry with some kitchen towel. Place into a large bowl.
2. Next, grate the carrots, then finely chop the spring onions green ends too and coriander if using and place in a bowl with the cabbage. Mix well to combine and blend the colours. Cover and store in the fridge until ready to eat.
3. In another smaller bowl, mix the olive oil, vinegar, ginger if using, sweetener, and black pepper together with a fork until well combined. Taste and season if needed.
4. When you are ready to serve your slaw, dress it with the dressing, mix it well, and enjoy. This dressing will keep in a clean jar/bottle on the side for a few weeks. The slaw will keep fresh in the fridge for around 3-5 days, only if you have not added the dressing to it.



BANANA BREAD OR MUFFINS

LIGHT AND FLUFFY AND FILLED WITH BANANAS.

1 LOAF OR APPROX.
6-8 MUFFINS

Ingredients

3-4 ripe bananas (yellow with brown spots are best)
70 grams of coconut sugar or other unrefined sugar (light brown muscovado)
100 millilitres of light oil (rice bran, olive oil suitable for baking etc.)
180 grams of flour (wholewheat spelt flour works well)
2 teaspoons of baking powder
1/4 teaspoon of ground cinnamon powder

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180c/160c fan/gas mark 5.
2. Line a medium sized bread tin with baking paper, greasing well to ensure the paper stays in place, or lightly oil a muffin tray or fill with cases.
3. In a large bowl peel and mash the bananas until soft, then add the sugar and oil and mix well to combine.
4. In a separate bowl measure the flour, baking powder and cinnamon. Next sieve it into the banana mixture, then fold in well (do not beat as you want to retain as much lightness to the mixture as possible).
5. Pour the mixture into the bread tin, or scoop around 3-4 tablespoonfuls into the muffin tray or cases.
6. Bake the loaf for 45 minutes, or if baking muffins for 25 minutes. Once the time is up, gently press the middle of the cake/muffins. If it springs back it is ready, if it sinks slightly continue to bake for a little longer, checking after 5 more minutes, repeating the press test.
7. Allow the cake to cool completely in the bread tin or muffin tray on a wire rack before removing. Top with the 'easy

frosting', and serve with whipped cream. These should keep for 3-5 days in an airtight container in a cool room.

COCONUT CREAM – OPTIONAL

Ingredients

1 tin of full fat coconut milk – chilled in the fridge overnight
1 tablespoon of light syrup – sweet freedom or maple is best

Method

To make the cream, remove the tin from the fridge, open the bottom and pour out any excess liquid (reserve to use in baking, curries or a smoothie etc.), scoop out the solid coconut and place in a bowl and beat into a thick cream-like consistency. Taste and add sweetener if needed, beating to incorporate. Store covered in the fridge until ready to serve.

EASY FROSTING

Ingredients

2 tablespoons of smooth nut butter (peanut, cashew etc.) or seed butter (sunflower, tahini)
2 tablespoons of coconut oil
2-3 tablespoons of unrefined sweetener – sweet freedom fruit syrup, or date syrup or maple syrup

Method

1. Place all the ingredients into a clean bowl and mix well with a fork until all the ingredients have been combined into a smooth sauce.
2. Pour mixture over the cake/s and spread out evenly. Place in the fridge for a short while to allow the frosting to harden slightly and set.

CHOCOLATE CAKE

A RICH INDULGENT CAKE—LIKE BROWNIE THAT IS NAUGHTY BUT SO NICE!



Ingredients

100 millilitres of oil suitable for baking – rice bran or olive oil
25 grams of cocoa
150 millilitres of plant milk – organic oat milk or any other non-dairy milk
100 millilitres of water (or use more plant milk)
75 grams of unrefined sugar – light brown muscovado or coconut sugar etc.
150 grams of plain flour – or use wholemeal spelt flour (ancient wheat flour)
2 and a 1/2 teaspoons of baking powder
1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon powder

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas mark 4.
2. Prepare a baking tray roughly 20cmx 10cm, lightly oil and line with baking paper.
3. Place the oil, cocoa, milk, water and sugar into a blender or bowl and blend or mix well with a whisk until smooth.
4. Sieve the flour, baking powder and cinnamon into a large bowl.
5. Pour the chocolate sauce into the flour mixture and using a large spatula or wooden spoon gently fold the liquid into the flour until it is well combined and all the flour has been mixed in.
6. Pour into the prepared tin, tap the tin lightly to remove any air bubbles and even out the mixture, then place in the oven and bake for 25 minutes.
7. After 25 minutes, check the cake by lightly pressing into the middle and if it springs back it is ready, if not leave for an additional 5 minutes then remove. Cool completely and cover the top with chocolate frosting if desired.

EASY CHOCOLATE FROSTING

Ingredients

2 tablespoons of nut butter (peanut, cashew etc.) or seed butter (sunflower, pumpkin, tahini)
2 tablespoons of coconut oil
1 and a half tablespoons of cocoa powder
2-3 tablespoons of unrefined sweetener – Sweet Freedom fruit syrup, or date syrup or maple syrup

Method

1. Place all the ingredients into a clean bowl and mix well with a fork until all the ingredients have been combined into a smooth sauce.
2. Pour mixture over the chocolate cake and spread out evenly. Place in the fridge for about 30 minutes to allow the frosting to harden slightly and set.



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PANCAKES

SO TASTY AND EASY TO MAKE



Ingredients

120grams or 1 cup of flour – (wholegrain or white spelt, wholemeal or plain flour)
1 tablespoon of unrefined light brown sugar
1 and a 1/2 teaspoon of baking powder
1 tablespoon of oil suitable for baking or 1-2 tablespoons of non-dairy spread (pure or vitalite)
1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon
220millilitres or 1 cup of non-dairy milk – oat milk, nut milk or organic soya milk (may need a little more)

Method

1. Sieve the flour into a bowl, followed by the sugar, baking powder and cinnamon. Next, add the non-dairy butter or oil and mix into the flour mixture until it resembles breadcrumbs. Now add the milk and whisk until you have a fairly smooth batter (add a little more milk if needed). Leave to one side for 5 minutes or so before cooking.
2. Heat a frying pan over a medium high heat (do not let it smoke)! It is hot when a drop of water flicked across the pan surface immediately sizzles. Pour 2-3 tablespoons of the mixture into the middle of the pan and cook until the edges begin to brown, and bubbles become visible on the top. Flip the pancake over and cook for a further minute until golden brown. Continue cooking until the batter is all used up (you may need to add a little more oil if they begin to stick). Keep the cooked pancakes in a warm oven until ready to serve, keeping the heat low so that they do not dry out.

CARAMELISED TOPPING

Ingredients

1 apple or banana
4 tablespoons of non-dairy milk
1-2 tablespoons of unrefined brown sugar or maple or sweet freedom fruit syrup
Optional - pinch of cinnamon

Method

1. Core the apple (and peel if not organic) or peel the banana then cut into thick chunky pieces.
2. Place the milk and sugar into a small frying pan on a medium heat and cook until it begins to bubble into a thick sauce.
3. Add the apple or banana to the pan, mix to coat in the sauce and allow to cook for a few minutes until soft and warmed through. Place some of the caramelised fruit onto top of your pancake whilst still warm.

Serve with yoghurt, and a drizzle of maple or fruit syrup.



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EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS

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Kam Taj is a Performance Coach, Speaker and Author and has helped hundreds of students and professionals achieve academic success.

Mary Taylor has delivered the Family Links emotional health programmes for over twenty years. She is a regular speaker on the subject of relationships and has spoken at various Westminster Briefings, Public Health Conferences, the PSHE Association Conference, and at the IFSEC 2019 conference on Emotional Health in the Workplace.

Dr Sarah Sease is a Clinical Psychologist at the Psychiatry and Therapy Centre, where she helps clients with relationship/intimacy issues, anxiety, depression, trauma, and other mental health challenges.

Sharon Gardner is a Plant-based Nutritionist and Holistic Chef at Made in Hackney, a Community Cookery School. She has a background in Health Sciences and is a practising Naturopath who specialises in plant-based nutrition. She is a passionate advocate of holistic health and positive ageing.

Susan Saunders is a health coach specialising in ageing well to help others have more energy and better health, now and in the future. She is also the author of The Age-Well Plan and co-author of the bestseller The Age-Well Project.

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"FAMILY ISN'T SOMETHING THAT'S
SUPPOSED TO BE STATIC, OR SET.
PEOPLE MARRY IN, DIVORCE OUT.
THEY'RE BORN, THEY DIE. IT'S
ALWAYS EVOLVING, TURNING INTO
SOMETHING ELSE."
SARAH DESSEN



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