

Free

MetroParent

Splashing around the Portland/Vancouver area

July 2012

**Mi Casa
Es Su Casa**
*Home
Exchange
Vacations*

**So Much
Summer Fun!**
*Best New
Kids' Books*

**Our Jam-Packed
Family Calendar**

**The Region's
Top Fairs &
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**Stress-Free
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**Pick Your
'Family
Favorites!'**

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Parent Postings

What do Temple Grandin and Vancouver mom Karen Krejcha have in common?



PHOTO COURTESY OF KREJCHA FAMILY

Vancouver mom Karen Krejcha was recently awarded the 2012 Distinguished Spectrumite Award, presented annually to an outstanding individual on the autism spectrum.

The Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership (GRASP) selected Vancouver mom Karen Krejcha as the winner of their 2012 Distinguished Spectrumite Medal (DSM). Last year's winner was Temple Grandin, the renowned author whose inspiring life was made into an award-winning HBO film. The DSM is presented annually to an adult on the autism spectrum who has demonstrated special talent, competency, emotional strength and accountability in numerous areas.

In 2008, Krejcha's sons - Ryan, 6, and Justin, 12 - were diagnosed with autism and Asperger's Syndrome, respectively. It was only after the boys were diagnosed that Krejcha realized she'd been living with undiagnosed Asperger's for decades. (A diagnosis later confirmed this.) In 2011, Krejcha co-founded the nonprofit Autism Empowerment with her husband, John, and currently serves as executive director for the organization.

For more information about GRASP, visit grasp.org. Learn more about Autism Empowerment at autismempowerment.org.

Feel the love! Give new clothes to foster kids

Donate new clothing to area foster children at any local Sleep Country store through July 22. All sizes are needed. For hours and store locations, visit sleepcountry.com or call 1-888-887-5337.

Local children's hospitals receive national recognition

Two local children's hospitals were recently recognized for outstanding patient care.

OHSU's Doernbecher Children's Hospital was nationally ranked in six categories - cancer, cardiology and heart surgery, diabetes and endocrinology, neonatology, neurology and neurosurgery, and orthopaedics - by *U.S. News & World Report* in their 2012-13 list of Best Children's Hospitals. For complete results of the report, visit health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/pediatric-rankings.

The Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Randall Children's Hospital at Legacy Emanuel was awarded a gold-level Beacon Award for Excellence by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses. The award recognizes hospital critical care units that employ evidence-based practices to improve patient and family outcomes. Learn more about the award at aacn.org/beacon.

Which came first: family dinners or strong families?

Numerous academic, social and health benefits have been linked to regular family meals, but a new study from Cornell University questions the nature of those correlations.

"We find that most of the association between family meals and

Vote for Your 'Family Favorites'!

It's that time again! We're asking area parents to tell us about their favorite places to go with kids in tow. Visit Metro-Parent.com and click on "Vote for Your Family Favorites." The contest runs through mid-August. We'll announce the region's Family Favorite destinations in our September issue. One lucky reader will win a Family Fun Pack that includes a \$50 gift card to the Family Favorite restaurant and toy store. See our Family Favorites Pages (pages 27-31) for more information.

teen well-being is due to other aspects of the family environment," says Kelly Musick, associate professor of policy analysis and management at Cornell and lead author of *Assessing Causality and Persistence in Associations Between Family Dinners and Adolescent Well-Being*, published in the June edition of the *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

The authors found a family's ability to gather regularly for family dinner is in part dependent on resources such as time and money, and in part related to other existing family characteristics including closeness and communication.

"Meals may afford a regular and positive context for parents to connect with children emotionally, to monitor their social and academic activities, and to convey values and expectations," says Musick. "This is what we suspect is driving any causal relationship between family dinners and child well being. But, family dinners also appear to be part and parcel of a broader package of practices, routines and rituals that reflect parenting beliefs and priorities, and it's unclear how well family dinners would work unbundled from the rest of that package."

'Locally grown' science activity book

A new story and activity book by Portland author and educator Rick Reynolds offers an engaging way to teach kids how the water cycle works.

Marco the Molecule Water Adventure and Activity Book explains the importance of water and the water cycle by telling the story

of Marco, a microscopic water molecule on a 4-billion-year-long adventure. Marco's story doubles as a coloring book, followed by activities including puzzles, mazes, a nature scavenger hunt and more. Geared toward elementary age kids, the book would be ideal for a classroom, a homeschooling family, or as a take-along travel activity. Learn more at engagingpress.com.

Salmon-safe parks? Only in Portland!

Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) has been recertified by Salmon-Safe, an Oregon nonprofit promoting land management practices that help Pacific salmon thrive in west coast watersheds. The bureau was first certified by Salmon-Safe in 2004 and continues to be the only parks organization in the country designated as salmon-friendly by the certification program.

You can support PP&R's salmon-safe efforts by practicing these salmon-friendly habits in local parks: (1) Stay on designated trails to reduce erosion, especially near streams; (2) Keep your dog leashed on trails and always clean up after him; and (3) Volunteer for a stream restoration project in your neighborhood. At home, promote a salmon-safe environment by phasing out yard and garden chemicals, reducing irrigation water, and looking for opportunities to filter rainwater from rooftops or driveways.

For more information, visit salmonsafe.org.

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