



Welcome from the PGP Director

By Audrey Stirling
Ruri and Harris' Mom

Welcome to the 21st year of Playgroup Programme. We are still a 100% volunteer organisation – now that's what I call amazing!

I would like to say a huge welcome to all our new and returning Playgroup members and volunteers. We hope you will have a fantastic year and we are pleased that you are here to help us to celebrate our coming of age – 21 years.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to take up a position in Playgroup, to assist, lead, and teach or in a board member capacity. With your ongoing support and commitment the Playgroup Programme will continue to have the opportunity to develop and succeed, thus ensuring our children learn the skills associated with both play and education building confidence and happiness.

We now have over 50 assistants, leaders and teachers helping over 200 children to have fun and learn, and 20 Board Members managing various aspects of the organisation, which is absolutely fantastic.

As a voluntary organisation we always invite and encourage parents to help whenever they can. We are extremely grateful for the continued support of all our volunteers which ensures the success of this wonderful and extremely important community provision.

New Board Members

Now, there are several changes within the personnel of the PGP, and as a result a few new additions to the organisation.

I am very excited to take over as Playgroup Director from Colette Foort; Colette is now the Playgroup Treasurer.

Jane Del Pozo is the Literacy Programme Coordinator. Jane along with her assistant Leisa Lendrum-Campbell will ensure the teaching programme volunteers are supported, the programme developed and ultimately that the children achieve!

Kerry McCance takes over responsibilities for the craft curriculum. For those who already know Kerry, know that she loves her arts and crafts and rummaging around buying all the materials which our children will turn into amazing pieces of artwork.

Liz Stevenson Haefliger is our new publications and newsletter editor. As you will all know our bi-monthly newsletter is sought after, and children are neglected as mum's eagerly read all the hot tips on how to amuse your children and more importantly the best places to eat out!! Please send all hot tips and useful information to Liz.

Nadine Nassif Lips, is the new PGP Secretary, ensuring all the Board meetings run smoothly and information is available.

PGP Information & Events

To keep you fully informed of all the events, happenings and goings on within Playgroup we have introduced several means of communication. We have a bi-monthly newsletter which is available throughout the year, we have developed our website www.playgroupprogramme.org and invite you to consult this and also feedback your comments for future development.

We are currently in the process of introducing an online chat room for playgroup leaders and assistants enabling you to gain support, talk and swap ideas without leaving your home. Lastly but not least, we have several notice boards at Crossroads Church which are also full of useful information.

Your thoughts and ideas about the Playgroup Programme are important to us; to keep abreast of these and to ensure that we are providing the best possible programme; an annual member survey will be carried out during January and February 2009. We will be seeking your opinions, feedback and input on a variety of issues with the aim of continually improving the programme.

We also like to get everyone, parents and children, together for a number of events throughout the year. These include group nights out, a Christmas party, English book fairs and the Literacy Show, and there may be a few fund-raising events to look forward to this year.

We Need Your Approval

In order for the PGP Board to operate this year we need you to approve the Board Members and the annual 2008-2009 budget. To do this we NEED YOU to attend our Annual General Meeting on TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14. This is an important meeting and it is essential that we have the full support of our membership, so PLEASE come and VOTE. To entice you, we will have a bit of social evening after the formalities with food and drink available.

Thank you all again and have a great year.

Three Month Calendar

Mon 01 Sep	Board Meeting	11 to 26 Oct	School Break in Vaud	Wed 5 Nov	Guy Fawkes Day
Tue 02 Sep	Start of School in France	Mon 13 Oct	Nov/Dec Newsletter Deadline	Thu 6 Nov	Back to School in France
Mon 08 Sep	Leader Orientation Meeting	Tue 14 Oct	Annual General Meeting	Mon 10 Nov	Board Meeting
Thu 11 Sep	Jeûne Genevois	18 to 26 Oct	School Break in Geneva	Tue 11 Nov	Armistice Day (Veteran's Day)
Mon 15 Sep	Start of PGP	Sat 25 Oct	Start of School Break in France	Mon 24 Nov	Literacy Parent Information Meeting
Mon 22 Sep	Jeûne Fédéral	Fri 31 Oct	Halloween	Thu 27 Nov	Thanksgiving Day

Inside this issue:

Suisse Toy Expo	2
There's an Entrepreneur in Your Playgroup	3
Welcome to Playgroup	4
Welcome to the Literacy Programme	5
An Interview With Nadine Nassif	6
Soupe du Jour	7
Mother-to-Mother	7

Playgroup Programme

c/o Crossroads Church
chemin de la Brunette
01210 Ferney-Voltaire
France

Web: www.playgroupprogramme.org
Email: pgp-director@hotmail.com

We are a registered non-profit organization.

Crossroads Church Corner

By Lucy Brown
Ben and Thomas' Mom

Family Activities at Crossroads Church

Let me extend a very warm welcome to Playgroup (which rents space from the church but is otherwise not affiliated with the church) from the members and staff of Crossroads Church.

Personally, I have been in the area for over five years now. During this time our family has been involved in the Playgroup Programme and Crossroads Church. We have two boys, aged five and three. Both boys have really benefited from their time with the Playgroup Programme. I have found volunteering over the years to be very rewarding. This year I have taken on the snack buying role and will attend a 3 to 4 years old group with our youngest son.

I thought I would provide some brief information on what else goes on at Crossroads Church. On Sunday mornings there are two identical services at 9:30am and 11:15am. There is a crèche provided at both services for babies and toddlers. We run our Sunday school parallel to both morning services for kids up to the age of 11.

Every Friday evening, our youth group (known as FAT Fridays) for kids in secondary school (11 and up) offers a variety of fun games and activities until 9pm.

Crossroads also offers activities for grown-ups. During the week there are ladies' groups which meet at the church on Tuesday mornings (with childcare provided) and Thursday afternoons as well as mixed and men's groups which meet at other points during the week. The community Bible Study International also meets at the church on a Thursday morning.

If you are interested in finding out more about activities at the church then please take a look at the church website www.crossroadchurch.fr or contact the church office by telephone +33 (0) 450 406511 or by email crossroads@free.fr.



Let Kindermusik guide your children in song, dance and social gatherings with children from birth to 7 years-old. Our licensed educators help you nurture and accelerate your child's total development because music makes memories... and math and reading skills, too. Try a Class for free and see for yourself!

IMAGINE WHIRLING. CREATING. STORYTELLING. AND SINGING. NOWHERE ELSE IS LEARNING THIS MUCH FUN.

www.kindermusik.com
Cologny
Christine Bryan-Buxton
bryan_buxton@bluewin.ch
076 567 53 56
Ferney-Voltaire/Geneva airport
Tina Pearce
kindermusikge@gmail.com
www.kindermusikge.com
+33 450 20 21 45
Lausanne
Clare Joyner
clarejoyner@yahoo.co.uk
021 723 03 26 / 078 867 71 69

Space available for advertisement

Suisse Toy Expo

By Lucy Brown

Always looking for something fun to do, our family has made an annual trip to the Suisse Toy Expo in Bern for the last couple of years. It was an exhibition first recommended to my husband by a model rail enthusiast colleague, but oh, there is so much more.

Global and Swiss toy manufacturers come together for a great exhibition. Companies such as Playmobil, Ravensberger, Crayola, Brio, Barbie, etc. are there with stands to amaze your children. Most stands have a play area to test out the toys they take a fancy to. It is also possible to purchase items from most stands so it is a good opportunity for some early Christmas shopping. There are plenty of places for refreshments to keep you going the whole day.

Some particular features that our young boys have enjoyed were:

- Regular model boat displays
- Afternoon model aircraft and helicopter displays
- Construction site with remote controlled diggers and trucks
- Model railway displays (Marklin, Hornby, etc.)
- Playing at the Brio, Playmobil, Lego stands (we have great photos of our boys sitting on a motorbike and in a racing car made from Lego)

- Train rides, Funfair rides and soft play/bouncy castle/trampoline area outside the exhibition hall

As adults we enjoyed the huge 'jeu de société' hall where you can try many games and puzzles from all around the world. This is a good place for older children to try out new games. There is also a large hall for computer games. We skipped the girly things but we did notice the Barbie fashion show! All very pink!

This year it will be held at BEA Bern Expo from October 1 to 5. For more information please see www.suissetoy.ch.

Charity Concert Benefiting the Disabled by the Morriston Orpheus Choir

By Sian Sibley

The Morriston Orpheus Choir is an internationally acclaimed group that has performed all over the world including Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House. Even the Queen enjoyed them at her golden jubilee celebration. They have a varied repertoire of classical songs, Broadway musical, opera, Welsh ballads and hymns. This is the first time a Welsh male voice choir has come to Geneva. It promises to be a very special night. The concert is a charity event. The money raised is for the Pays de Gex disability association ECLAT who will use it to equip a residential home for ten disabled adults.

- Place: BFM (Batiment des Forces Motrices), the island in the middle of the Rhone River in Geneva
- Date and Time: Saturday, October 11 at 8:30pm (doors open 7:30pm)
- Price: The tickets are priced at 75 and 125 CHF for the better seats (125 CHF includes a glass of champagne during the interval). 45 and 55 CHF seats are also available further back.

- Online Ticket Sales: www.concert-morriston-orpheus.1s.fr

- Websites of Interest: www.morristonorpheus.com and www.association-eclat.org

- For More Info: email kbremont@yahoo.com or telephone +41 (0)79 507 2153.

Letter from the Editor

By Liz Stevenson Haefliger
Henry and Paul's Mom

Now I know how Clark Kent felt his first day at the Daily Planet. Shy, overwhelmed, the thrill of a deadline, excitement over meeting and working with so many new people, eagerness to do a good job, loads of skills to develop, and knowledge to acquire. As I take on my roles and responsibilities, here are a couple of things I have learned so far.

My predecessor, Karen Van Dieren, was an outstanding Publications and Newsletter Editor. You can find her creativity, clever humor, style and wisdom in all her efforts. She will be sorely missed but not for long. She continues to volunteer for PGP as well as serve as my mentor. I cannot begin to express my appreciation for her kind and unconditional support during our transition. Many thanks for three years of hard work and dedication. By the way, how is it that nothing ever fazes her!

The newsletter is for and about its members. It owes its success to the engaging people who are willing to share their thoughts and experiences. No idea is unwanted - be it short or long, time saver or waster, outrageous or conventional, fiction or non-fiction, authored by parent or family or child or leader or teacher or assistant or friend. In fact, the newsletter needs it all. Photos, recipes, quotes, games, poems, artwork, reviews, questions, tales, announcements, reports, comments, corrections and so on.

There are some features that I would like to get started as regulars but which require your input. For example,

- Going Places (what are your travel experiences near and far?)
- Top Ten (what are the most useful website links, best creperies, nearest ski lessons, favorite Wednesday or weekend activities, etc?)
- Party Central (think locations, cake bakers and caterers, entertainment, party good suppliers)
- There's an Entrepreneur in Your Playgroup (are you or your partner a small-business owner, freelancer, artist, contractor, or independent as well as a member of Playgroup? Then please tell us how you got started or interested in what you do and provide a brief description of your alternative career.)
- Go Local (have you made any recent discoveries that are produced in the Geneva region?)

Here are some additional brainstorming topics :

- Books
- Toys
- Restaurants
- Beauty
- Health
- Decorating

- The environment
- Holidays (New Year, Mother's Day, Father's Day)
- Being an expat or an English-speaker
- How to get rid of or donate all of your unwanted stuff
- How to learn French
- The funny things children say and do
- Your shocked or delighted feedback to something you read in the newsletter or elsewhere

Let your inner muse go wild and start sending your submissions by email to newsletter_pgp@yahoo.com.

Thanks in advance. I look forward to reading your **Super** contributions in future issues.

The November/December Newsletter
Deadline is Monday, October 13.

Go Local

By Niamh Kromodimedjo
Dylan and Mia's Mom

Book Review: Roller Coaster Decade

I recently read an excellent book written by Livia Moser who lives in Geneva. I want to publicise her book as much as possible because it was a fantastic read and the book (and Livia) really deserve to do well. It's a courageously honest and entertaining autobiography of ten years of her life. It offers an interesting insight into living with bipolar illness and what it's like inside a Swiss mental institution among other interesting and extremely difficult experiences Livia has endured - including a kidney transplant at Hôpital Cantonal! I read it in one evening as I could not put it down - so I can confidently recommend it. You can order the book on Amazon but it would be great if you could also spread the word to anyone else you think would be interested in reading Livia's story.

Not only will you get an entertaining, insightful and thought provoking read, you will be supporting a local young budding author who deserves a break!

Here is the author's summary of the book:
"The Roller Coaster Decade is an autobiography of 10 years of my life which begins when I was eighteen years old. I like all other high school graduates had plans for my life, but sometimes life just doesn't work out that way.

I was diagnosed with bipolar illness and put into a mental facility in Switzerland, therefore having to postpone attending Hotel Management School for a year, but I finally made it. I did, however, suffer three more manias after that. After each mania I had to start my life from scratch, because manias have heavy consequences.

In the year 2000 I was told that my kidneys no longer functioned and was put on a dialysis machine. After sixteen months I had the kidney transplant. I was by far the youngest.

This book is about the ups and downs in life, what it takes when so many unexpected and tragic things happen in a short period of time. Most of all it is not a book strictly about the above. My 'Decade' story is told honestly with humor and that the message is to be brave enough to speak about your darkest moments, because once you do others open up to you and your own burdens disappear. Suffering in silence only hurts you. And finally it is about a gift called life that we all take for granted."



There's an Entrepreneur in Your Playgroup

By Eddy Hill
Juliana's Dad

Designing to make a difference

From my first days in London design agencies, my dream was always to settle in the Geneva area and open my own design business.

Since February 2008, I now offer my brand design services to organizations and companies who make a real difference in today's world, mostly in humanitarian, environmental and innovation fields.

The first six months have been a great experience where word-of-mouth within the multilingual community has proven to be the best advertisement by far.

Through Eddy Hill Design, I aim to work with few, select clients and develop a long-lasting relationship based on a strong understanding of their brand, processes and requirements. A sample of my current clients includes: GAVI Alliance, UNICEF; The World Business Council for Sustainable Development; and The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, WHO.

If you need to review your organization's brand, to design communication material for print or online, or would simply like to find out more, don't hesitate to get in touch. Give me a ring on +33 (0)6 31 23 08 54 or visit my website at www.eddyhilldesign.com.

Welcome to Playgroup from the Leader Trainer and Representative

By Trish Clements
Hugh and Ronan's Mom

On behalf of the Playgroup Leaders and Assistants, I would like to welcome you to the 2008-2009 Playgroup year. We do hope that both you and your child will look forward to and enjoy your time at PGP each week - that is our goal. As a fully volunteer run organisation, we are very fortunate to have such wonderful members who step forward to lead and assist in the Playgroup Programme. It requires no small commitment to be there and run a group week after week. So please support your leaders - they are invaluable.

Here are a few ideas of how you can make a difference to your group:

- Arrive on time!
- Contribute to an Adult Snack rota.
- Become the Library Assistant for your group - ask your Leader what this entails.
- Continue chatting with a friend while doing the washing-up, sweeping the floor, tidying - it can be never ending here just like at home!
- If attending with a newborn and/or are unable to help with lifting, take on a lightweight task above. Or perhaps make 'Frothy' Milk for the coffee drinkers in your group - see the recipe below - this is always a hit.



- Become the Big Toy specialist with another adult, knowing how to store the equipment safely in the Big Toy Cupboard.
- Help pre-cut templates for craft time and ensure lids are put back on markers and glue after craft time.
- Ask your Leader how you can help, and offer to take on a task for a few weeks at a time. As the weeks go by, please remember to continue to help out.
- If you have any ideas or suggestions to share, your Leader will be delighted to hear them.

As you can see, none of the above tasks are a chore in itself, but altogether they can be quite time-consuming. Your help in these areas will allow your Leaders to dedicate more of their time and energy to animating the sessions, so even more fun is had by all. Thank you as always for your support and wishing you many happy times at PGP over the course of the year ahead.

Frothy Coffee

By Trish Clements

If plain old regular coffee just will not do, try the following to add a bit of oomph to the PGP favourite brew.

- Add milk to the Bodum-type French Coffee Press found in the Snack Cupboard.
- Plunge up and down until you have a frothy milk to add to coffee. The result looks and tastes as great as the \$\$\$ espresso machines!
- We highly recommend washing the plunger and container immediately after use. Please ensure that both are perfectly clean when you are done.

- This works equally well with warm or cold milk. If warming the milk, make sure the container is not made of metal and pop in the microwave for a few seconds.

This was perfected by Vicki Beney in a Playgroup a few years ago. Vicki has held various volunteer roles over the years - she was Snack & Supplies Buyer for the past few years and had previously assisted in numerous groups. As Vicki's boys have now outgrown PGP, we want to say a big Thank You for all her help.



So Long Lisa

By Trish Clements

Lisa McCarthy has rejoined the professional world after several years being involved in PGP. She has lead Playgroups with wonderful enthusiasm and energy and has also served on the Board as Leader Trainer, where she did a fantastic job. Even though she will no longer be participating, she has left an indelible mark on the Playgroup Programme, for which we are all thankful. Best of luck Lisa!

"There was a definite process by which one made people into friends, and it involved talking to them and listening to them for hours at a time. "

Rebecca West (1892 - 1983)

Welcome to the Literacy Programme from the Literacy Coordinator

By Jane del Pozo
Anna and David's Mom

Welcome to the start of the 17th year of the Literacy Programme. I am very pleased to be writing as the Literacy Coordinator. This will be my fifth year in PGP and I am looking forward to getting more involved taking on coordination of the Literacy Programme. Having spent a long time reading the notes I have been left, I am equally pleased that this is the first year the Literacy Coordinator has an assistant! Leisa Lendrum-Campbell, a qualified secondary school English teacher with 10 years experience, will be working with me for advice on curriculum and teaching.

I would like to thank the 13 teachers and 23 assistants who have volunteered to make this another successful year of the Literacy Programme. This year we have one extra class as the Literacy 4/5 Level has been split into two separate classes. Of course, please do not hesitate to contact the literacy team if you have any questions. Those accompanying children to classes are also invaluable in helping out, from assisting with files or library books to replacing absent assistants. Just ask from time to time if you can help - it will be greatly appreciated!

Another important element of the success of the programme is support at home in continuing the work of our 1.5 hours throughout the week. This could be with weekly homework, reading, writing, speaking and listening, whenever possible, and general awareness of literacy. At all levels a little time spent on reading together every day is invaluable.

Writing doesn't have to be homework - my daughter loves to write my shopping list for me. We hope to give you many more ideas throughout the year.

Once classes are underway the next important date is the Literacy Parent Information Evening on Monday, 24 November. This is an important chance to see what the children are doing in their classes, speak to their teachers and find out how you can support them both.

Lastly, I would just like to remind you of a few things to ensure that classes run as smoothly as possible:

- Please respect class start and finish times (and have your child go to the toilet before class!).
- According to PGP rules there must be a parent or guardian present at all times in the church while the child is attending the literacy session.
- You must sign your child in at the start of the session (sign-up sheets are by the door of all the classes) and indicate where you will be waiting.
- Children must be picked up from the classroom at the end of the session.
- Please be aware that this year there will only be a snack in Pre-Literacy classes. Perhaps your child might need you to bring something for the end of class.

And now for some fun: you can always encourage your child to play with words and letters. Say it quickly or make up your own silly rhymes:

On the Ning Nang Nong

On the Ning Nang Nong
Where the Cows go Bong!
And the Monkeys all say Boo!
There's a Ning Nang Ning
Where the trees go Ping!
And the tea pots Jibber Jabber Joo.
On the Nong Ning Nang
All the mice go Clang!
And you just can't catch 'em when they do!
So it's Ning Nang Nong!
Cows go Bong!
Trees go Ping!
Nong Ning Nang!
The mice go Clang!
What a noisy place to belong,
Is the Ning Nang Ning Nang Nong!!

Spike Milligan (*A Children's Treasury of Milligan: Classic Stories and Poems*, 2006)

Children's Corner

By Jane del Pozo

Literacy Competition

Each newsletter will have a competition for the different literacy levels. I hope this will help with having some fun at home. This time it is for the Pre-Literacy classes.

Pre-Literacy Competition

Write your name and draw a picture of three things that begin with the same letter.

These can be submitted to teachers before October 17 and there will be a small prize for the winner who will be announced in the next newsletter.

Countdown Conundrum

Ask someone to time 30 seconds while you work out the following conundrums, they are all animals. Activity tip: teach your child to type and print out the letters, then cut the letters up and use them as a puzzle so your child can work them out more easily.

Pre-Literacy

A T C
G O D
T A R

Literacy 1

R E E D
N I O L
R E A B

Literacy 2

E Z B A
G E R I T
S E O R H

Literacy 3

F I R G F A
T E L E P H A N
M E N K O Y

Literacy 4 and 5

R R I S U Q E L
P O P O P S A T M I H U



Simply Raw

By Amy Webster
Certified Raw Food Coach

Raw food brings many health benefits

Are you stressed, tired and uneasy? Are you lacking energy and vitality? Do you keep looking for a natural state of well being? Don't hesitate, try raw food!

This may sound like a clever ad, but believe me, it isn't. Many people who decide to give raw food a try have serious health issues they want to address. For me, it was the lack of energy which is widespread in middle-aged women who manage to raise a family while running a successful career. Raw food helped me increase my energy levels and boost my vitality. Side benefits included weight loss, enhanced immune system (which means I rarely get sick now), optimal health. To put it simply, raw food has allowed me to feel my best.

What is raw food?

It's a healthy and instinctive way to reconnect with your true nature, eliminate the numerous toxins resulting from modern life and boost your immune system. This diet is rich in nutrients. It fulfills one of our deepest instincts: this ancestral call for pure and unprocessed food, such as nature has meant it for us. There are many scientific reasons supporting the health benefits of a raw food diet, but the most important one is the fact that cooking above a certain temperature kills the food's natural enzymes. Our body needs enzymes to digest so will produce its own when these are lacking. When eating raw, however, this task is no longer required, which allows energy to be released and put to better use – i.e. eliminate toxins, heal and do all the things the body knows to do!

In other words, the more raw food you eat, the more energy your body will be able to use or release.

What kind of foods does one eat on a raw food diet?

Raw and living foods are composed essentially of raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, sprouted grains and cereals, oils, herbs, spices and seaweeds – preferably organic, local and seasonal. Contrarily to many beliefs, these types of foods cover all the nutritional needs of human beings and can translate into a wide variety of products and combinations. They can be prepared as juices, smoothies, sauces, a variety of salads, soups, pâtés, as well as crackers, biscuits, cakes and dehydrated bread – the possibilities are endless, including tasty desserts! There are a great variety of recipes from which to choose and find total satisfaction!

Raw and Living Foods are not a fashion.

This is not the latest miracle diet. This food concept has always existed. It was recently updated thanks to many findings and research studies which have established the direct link between food and health. The food we eat affects not only our health, but also our performance, our moods, our general state of mind. Raw food helps prevent or even cure a number of civilization diseases and reinforces our immune system which is severely undermined by our modern lifestyles. All members of the family can benefit. In fact, given the high amount of toxins and stress we are all exposed to, a high raw diet becomes the best sickness and life insurance for adults and children alike.

Raw food is easy to prepare.

But to enjoy it fully, you need to learn a few basic principles, adopt new ways of preparing food, gradually change your eating habits and equip your kitchen to enhance convenience and performance. On raw food you can enjoy a number of original and delicious dishes of authentic yet leading-edge raw cuisine. By increasing the amount of raw food you eat, you take charge of your health, your wellness, your life!

Raw food can be adopted as and when you feel, according to your own desires and abilities.

By following your instinct and tuning into your own rhythm, you will regain inner balance. This feeling of peace and strength will continue to evolve as you move closer to optimal health and wellness. Raw food also leads to an inside journey that will take you toward genuine authenticity, as well as greater respect for yourself, others and nature as a whole. For some, this means embarking on a life-changing journey that touches upon all aspects of our lives – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. When combined with other essential ingredients to an optimal life – exercise, water, sun, sleep, a positive attitude – a healthy and balanced diet based on fresh and raw food can truly transform you and allow you to become the person you have always wanted to be.

To learn more, try google and you will find a myriad of extremely informative websites in English with practical tips and recipes. This trend has now recently arrived in Switzerland and should you want to take raw food classes or learn about local suppliers, try www.simplyraw.ch for raw food recipes, inspiration, as well as information on latest events and classes.

An Interview With Nadine Nassif

Editor's Note: Nadine is the new PGP Secretary.

Tell us about yourself? I was born and raised in Geneva by an Irish mother from Donegal and an Egyptian father. I met my husband Daniel, at work when I was a Portfolio Administrator for large Investment Management company in Geneva. We have two children, Tarah nearly 7, who will be leaving PGP to join ENP, and Aidan who just turned 5 and will be following Literacy 1. This is our second year with PGP. Up to very recently I was working part-time for a smaller financial organisation, but I've just decided to give a try to being an active "stay-at-home mum" so I'm very excited about being more involved with PGP this year. We have moved from Geneva to Sergy in France and both children go to the public primary school.

Where do you like to do your grocery shopping?

Why? Having worked up to now, my shopping habits depended pretty much on how much time I was disposed of, and what was on my way in or out of work. Basically, I avoided the big centers, such as Migros Thoiry or Balaxert, because I found that I would waste a lot of time getting around, and there was too much choice for a frazzled, on a timer, working mum. Now things are different, I appreciate having more time to look around and compare, I like Migros because I think they always offer good value, and wide range of products.

What is your favourite restaurant in Geneva or environs?

As a family we enjoy going to an Indian restaurant, right by the Cem called Madhura. They serve early dinner and a great kiddy menu. Our kids love going there for the tandoori chicken and the nan. The staff is very friendly too and the food is very good and reasonably priced. Plus it's very close to where we live.

Otherwise, if I'm in town without the children I like going to the Sushi restaurant in the Confederation Centre called "NO Sushi". They have a great sushi train, with plenty of choice.

What's your favourite sport? Last year I was desperately looking to start a sport activity. I'd had to give up my ballet classes because the time schedule just didn't work for me and I was then looking for something, that would help keep me in shape, alleviate my perpetual stress, and something easy to start and stick with. I discovered YOGA, and it was a true revelation to me that this was the "sport" geared to my personality and lifestyle. I'd always thought Yoga to be a sort of passive, still, meditation, until I discovered Power Yoga and it's derivatives. Well believe me you sweat, free your mind and feel your body in the most odd and forgotten places. I've had many different teachers, which has given me a broad view of various forms of practising. I try and practice between 1-2 times a week. If I could I would love to do it everyday!

What's your favourite book? I'm passionate about Harry Potter and I'm very sad the saga has come to an end, I was really mesmerized by J.K. Rowling's writing and her stories. It must be the kid in me. It's the only time I've ever been able to read a 500+ page book. Otherwise, I also like Anne Rice and her vampire books.

What's your favourite TV show? I'm a big Sci-Fi Fan, so I'll watch Star Wars, Star Trek, or Battlestar Galactica any time. Otherwise, I'm totally hooked on 24, Desperate Housewives and Grey's Anatomy.

What's your favourite summer holiday destination?

Since we've had kids I must admit we've had trouble finding the adequate holiday for the whole family. We've had a great holiday when the kids were younger at the Domaine du Grand-bois, near Nevers in France, where you can rent a self-catered chalet in a large Domaine, equipped with an indoor-outdoor pool, farm animals, pony rides, outdoor playgrounds, ping-pong etc... only drawback is you have to cater to yourself all week as there is not a restaurant in sight. Since then we have tried a Pierre et vacances club in Cap Esterel, which we found disastrous due to the crowds and poor quality of the food... So we are still in search of THE perfect holiday.

What's your favourite winter holiday destination? For the last two winters we have enjoyed taking a ski holiday from home. Because of our proximity to the station du Col de la Faucille, we enrolled both kids in the international ski school every morning from 9-12 and my hubby and I would have 3 hours of skiing when the slopes are still empty or have a long walk in the snow. We would then picnic and drive back down and still have most of the afternoon free back at home. This a great compromise to a real mountain chalet holiday. You just need to put on that alarm clock!

What's my soft spot? I am a real Chocoholic, (recently I indulged in one of those big bags of nuts/raisins and orange peel covered in black, milk and white chocolate that you only get in Migros). They are my "peché mignon". In my world, the definition of dessert is: it must contain some kind of chocolate! Otherwise, I love clothes, and fashion, so I have an overflowing cupboard and can be a compulsive buyer at times. But let's just say it's my way of compensating for giving up smoking...

Soupe du Jour

By Soupylady
The Masked Mom

Some Soups for Autumn

I got my first pumpkin from the shops last week. The weather was turning kind of autumnal so I excitedly thought maybe it would be a good time to start making soup again. I have never been a great fan of chilled soup, although I am partial to the odd bowl of gazpacho. I am not at my soupy best in hot weather. The next day, however, summer returned, so my poor pumpkin is sitting by my fruit bowl waiting. Still, I thought maybe I should share my favourite pumpkin soup recipe based closely on the one from the *New Covent Garden Soup Company's Book of Soups*. I'm sure autumn is just round the corner!



Pumpkin Soup

I'm pretty sure that the Demerara sugar is the secret ingredient.

25g butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
200g potatoes, peeled and chopped
900g pumpkin, diced (I like potimarron the best)
250g carrots, peeled and diced
1.2 litres vegetable stock
150 ml milk
Demerara sugar to taste
Finely grated nutmeg to taste

Melt the butter in a large pan and cook the onion gently for 5 minutes without colouring. Add the potato, pumpkin, carrots and vegetable stock. Cover, bring to the boil and simmer for about 20 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Blitz with a blender, then add the milk and sugar and nutmeg, if using.

My other recipe was created after trawling through the Internet to find a use for a glut of cherry tomatoes we experienced over the summer. I was worried a cherry tomato soup might have a strange texture due to the high skin to pulp ratio, but it didn't and I wholeheartedly recommend it.



Roasted Cherry Tomato and Sweet Potato Soup

Quantities are not important here. Add more or less stock depending on how thick you want your soup. The sweet potato makes it deliciously velvety, and I'm sure you could easily replace the cherry tomatoes for normal ones and still have a wonderful soup.

1 onion, roughly chopped
1 kg sweet potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped
500g – 750g cherry tomatoes
Olive oil
1 litre vegetable stock
1 – 2 tsp sugar, optional

Preheat your oven to 200°C. Bung all the prepared vegetables in a roasting tin, drizzle with oil and cook until the sweet potatoes are soft and beginning to caramelize. Scrape vegetables and juice into a pan, add the stock and bring to the boil. Blitz until smooth. Add a little sugar if you think it needs it.

Bon Appétit!



Mother-to-Mother

By Gay Richards
Midwife

Exercise and Pregnancy

If you are pregnant and thinking, 'hurray! I can put my feet up, chill out and have a very good excuse to stop exercising', well think again! Here are some pointers that may make you change your mind.

Research has shown that exercise promotes muscle tone, strength and endurance which helps prepare for the physical challenges of labour. Being active reduces pregnancy complaints like backache, constipation, piles, swelling and tiredness. By promoting a better sleep you have more energy for the rest of the household.

- More stamina for labour and delivery
- Shorter, easier labour
- Faster postnatal recovery
- Increases circulation helping to avoid those pregnancy complaints
- Reduced risk of excess weight gain
- Positive healthy attitude and sense of control
- Helps with relaxation of mind and body

Is it safe? Safe within reason, your medical history and pregnancy should be normal and if you are unsure about this seek advice from your midwife/doctor. Listen to your body and always use your common sense. If you have been used to exercising before pregnancy your body will be more familiar with it. Recommended low impact sports are stretching, swimming, aqua aerobics, walking, Pilates and yoga.

Exercise stimulates endorphins in your body which gives you a 'feel good' feeling lifting your mood and making you feel better about yourself and your self-image. Being in control helps you have a positive mental attitude which is always a good thing. Being out and about helps you meet other mums in the same area. Go on..... give it a try and boost yourself during this special time in your life. Good luck!

Miscellaneous

America Votes

Are you a US citizen living abroad? Then it is your right to vote in the General Elections in November. You will be part of a historical presidential race. If you have not already done so, then request your absentee ballot. The deadlines are in October but are state-specific. There are many websites that are interactive and generate the form you need. They also provide you with the correct mailing address. Print, sign, mail, and get informed about the issues while you wait for your ballot to arrive.
www.overseasvotefoundation.org
www.longdistancevoter.org
www.votefromabroad.org

Going Places - Near

Zurich is just a three-hour train ride away. It is a beautiful city that is amazingly cosmopolitan. There are fun activities for both young and old. However, what makes me think of it at this time of the year is Expovina. This is an exceptional wine festival that is held on boats on Lake Zurich. You can sample award-winning wines from all over the world. The dates are 30 Oct to 13 Nov.

Why not get away for a weekend without the children? For more information, see www.expovina.ch (be forewarned, the site is in German). To get the most out of a visit to Zurich, check out www.zurichtourism.ch.

Healthiness is Next to Happiness

Nordic Walking is a low impact but highly efficient sport. It is also very popular in Europe. Basically, it combines ski-type poles with walking, hiking or trekking. You work arm and leg muscle, build endurance, burn calories, improve posture and balance and much more. The whole family can do it too.

The Lavaux Nordic Walking Event is an annual race. This year it is being held on Sun 2 Nov in Vevey. The course takes you through a UNESCO World Heritage site. If you have never tried Nordic walking, then free classes are being offered in preparation for the race. Go to www.lavaux-nordic-walking.ch for more information.

What's On In and Around Geneva

By Claire Dorey (Newsletter Assistant)
Lucy's Mom

September

Until 30 Sep- **Through the Eyes of Childhood. DON'T MISS** this moving outdoor photo exhibit along the Quai Wilson and Lake Geneva! The Swiss association Enfants du Monde asked children from around the world how they see the world today and what their dreams are for tomorrow. The children were given cameras and took pictures to answer these questions. A very interesting way to introduce our children to poverty and other children's viewpoints on life and the world today. For more details: www.edm.ch

8 Sep to 30 Nov- **InterSoccer** offers girls and boys between the ages of 4 and 13 a great soccer experience. Programmes available in Versoix, Geneva and Vevey. There are also football camps during October break. www.intersoccer.ch

20 Sep to 10 Dec- **Chaperon Rouge Cartoon (Little Red Riding Hood)**. An artistic puppet show for children ages 4 and up. Théâtre des Marionnettes de Genève. For more info: www.marionnettes.ch

20 Sep- **First Aid Course 1: Child Resuscitation (CPR and Cardiac Massage)**. Given by Dr. Alessandro Diana in English at the Kiddie Club. www.kiddieclub.ch/courses_adult.htm

23 and 30 Sep- **Great Expectations. In English.** A theatre adaptation of Charles Dickens' famous novel played by two actors and a musician who beautifully transmit this classic to children 12 and up. Presented by Am Stram Gram children's theatre in Geneva. Limited spaces - reservation required: www.amstramgram.ch

26 to 28 Sep- **Equid' Espaces**. This year the 4th edition of the **big horse show** will feature a great variety of horses of different breeds and origins. Competitions for all categories, demonstrations... and something for all horse-lovers. In La Roche sur Foron. www.rochexpo.com

27 Sep- The 21st annual "**Desalpe**" (**Cows Come Home**) in Saint-Cergue. Be there at 8:30am to watch this spectacular cow parade as the costumed cows come down from the mountain pastures for the winter. You'll also find a large selection of traditional and local foods as well as artisans' stands. More information at: www.st-cergue.ch.

29 Sep to 1 Oct- **Trésors dans la Glace (Treasures in the Ice)**. Marionette show about the adventures of two sea animals for children 4 and up performed by the talented puppeteers troupe: "Les Croquettes" at the Ferme de Marignac, Grand Lancy. Description can be found at: www.regart.ch/croquettes

Until 12 Oct- **Jardin de Maths (Mathematical Garden)**. An exhibit that allows the whole family to discover mathematics through the patterns in nature and plants. Conservatoire et Jardins Botaniques, Geneva. www.ville-ge.ch/cjb

Until Jan 2009- **The Dark Side of the Lake : Myths and Legends & Nonsense** by the Swiss artists Plonk and Replonk. This exhibit traces back to the lake's ancient history and takes you on a fantastic voyage. It takes a humorous look at Lake Geneva through distorted images and objects. For more info: www.museeduleman.ch

Until May 2009- **From Time to Time**. A hands-on exhibition which allows you to spend a moment with this strange and nonchalant phenomenon: time as it passes. For everyone, from age 7 and up. At the Musée d'Histoire des Sciences in Geneva and Espace des Inventions in Lausanne. www.ville-ge.ch/mhs
www.espace-des-inventions.ch

October

1 Oct- **Les sorcières n'existent pas (Witches don't exist)**. Marionette show for children ages 3 to 8. Shown in Nyon at l'Usine à Gaz Theatre. www.usineagaz.ch

4 Oct- **Le Soldat Rose (The Pink Soldier)**. A French musical comedy for children. The delectable encounters of a boy who meets a toy soldier in a toy shop. In Geneva. For excerpts: www.lesoldatrose-lespectacle.fr and more info: www.geneva-arena.ch.

4 to 7 Oct- In Palexpo Exhibition Hall 7, come and admire a beautiful selection of classic and collectors' cars, planes, and boats at the **Geneva Classics 2008**. For more details: www.geneva-classics.ch

4 to 12 Oct- **Cinématou Film Festival**. An annual animated and fiction film festival held in Geneva's Grütli cultural center including a competition for short animated films as well as a whole program of quality children's and general audience films. For more info and a look at the program: www.cinematou.ch

7 Oct- **Expat-Expo**. Exposition held from 11am to 5pm at Geneva's Palexpo focused on the English-speaking community. A fun, informative and interesting outing for the whole family. It's free too! Also a last opportunity for US citizens to register to vote for the U.S. presidential elections. www.expat-expo.ch

12 Oct- The 17th annual **Marche de l'Espoir (March for Hope)**. Organized by the Swiss organization: Terre des Hommes. This successful walk-a-thon allows families to enjoy a lovely day on Geneva's Quai du Mont-Blanc, Quai Wilson and surrounding gardens while supporting this year's cause: children's health and nutrition in underdeveloped countries. For details about sponsor sheets and registration: www.marchedelespoir.ch

14 to 19 Oct- **Au Bout des Doigts (On Your Fingertips)**. A marionette show created just for little ones. A magical initiation to theatre and puppeteering with small finger puppets. For toddlers ages 1 to 3 years old. Théâtre des Marionnettes, Geneva. Limited seating. Reservations : www.marionnettes.ch

Don't forget to turn your
clocks back one hour on
Sunday, October 26.

26 Oct- Celebrate **Halloween at the Parc Pré-Vert at Signal de Bougy** (Aubonne exit.) Activities start at 11:30am in the restaurant followed by a children's parade at 1:30 (weather permitting) and a show at 2pm. For more information: www.signaldebougy.ch

26 Oct to 31 Oct- **Barbabor**. Geneva's famous children's theatre Am Stram Gram starts off this year's program with this sea bound comical play about a boy named Leo who meets a captain and sails into lots of adventure. Book tickets ahead since limited spaces: www.amstramgram.ch

29 to 30 Oct- **P'tits Yeux Grand Ecran (Little Eyes, Big Screen)**. Gex's 5th annual children's film festival with Africa as its theme will take place during the French autumn break school holidays. Check out details at: www.ville-gex.fr

November

1 Nov- **First Aid Course 2: Child Injuries and Illnesses**. Given by Dr Penny Fraser in English at the Kiddie Club. The same class is being offered in the morning and the afternoon. www.kiddieclub.ch/courses_adult.htm

Until 2 Nov- Enjoy all the fun and activities for the whole family at **Parc Pré-Vert at Signal de Bougy** including clown shows (on weekends,) bread-making, a questions and answers science exhibit and a huge play area... www.signaldebougy.ch



The Library
In English

Rue de Monthoux 3
CH-1201 Geneva
022 732 80 97
www.thelibrary.ch
library@thelibrary.ch

Children's Story Hour



Come and join us
Our Children's Library contains
over 3000 titles and is a great
place to discover new books!

Wednesdays 15:00-16:00
For children ages 3 - 7
Free and open to the public

Starting 17 September 2008
and continuing throughout the school year

Space available for advertisement

www.playgroupprogramme.com