

Merrimack Valley

May 2026

Parent

When Peace
Lives Next
Door

Summer
Camps
&
Schools

Miss Cathy's
Book Reviews

Free

www.merrimackvalleyparent.com

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Parent

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Editor@merrimackvalleyparent.com

To Advertise:
Mike@merrimackvalleyparent.com

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Miss Cathy's
 I LOVE BOOKS
 Children's Book Reviews

By Cathy A. Morrow



The month of May brings us many reasons to appreciate and enjoy the world around us, warmer weather, no heavy coats, and baseball season. This month I have chosen two books that help us recognize and savor each moment.

HELLO OCEAN
 Written by Pam Muñoz Ryan
 Illustrated by Mark Estrella
 Charlesbridge, Publishers
 Best for Ages 5 and up

of magnificent illustrations and picturesque words you will find you can almost hear the sounds and smell the aroma of the beach. You and your children are sure to want to go to the beach after reading it.

A young family decides to go to the beach. The story centers around their little girl while she thoroughly enjoys every aspect of her trip to the beach. She is in awe of the sights, the sounds, the smells. She stands at the edge of the ocean and feels the water rushing around her feet. She listens to the oceans roar and breathes in the fresh salt ocean smells in the air. She loves the feel of the ocean as she glides through the water.

With this book's combination

Terry Teddy and I give this book -- -- four paws up



GET A HIT MO!
 Written by David A. Adler
 Illustrated by Sam Ricks
 Random House Children's Books
 A Division of Penguin Random House, LLC, Publisher
 Best for Ages 5 and up

Mo loved playing with his little league baseball team. Mo was a little disappointed that he was always placed in right field, because there wasn't much action in right field. Although he tried his hardest, most of the time he did not get a hit. His coach worked with all the players to help them succeed. Mo tried hard to get a hit? Sadly, he was also discouraged, because he struck out so many times. His coach would holler to him to swing, keep his eye the

ball. Will Mo ever know the thrill of getting a hit? Will he ever be a true asset for his team?

This is a Step Into Reading Book. This story is one with which many young baseball players can identify. It also shows the importance of continuing to try your hardest and never giving up. The illustrations are simple, but show true emotion.



Terry Teddy and I give this book -- -- four paws up

These books were generously provided by
Jabberwocky Bookshop, Newburyport
Jabberwockybookshop.com



When Peace Lives Next Door

By Maria Luisa Salcines

I have lived next door to my parents for 35 years. When I want to visit my dad, my Mom passed away 18 years ago, I walk out a side entrance and follow a gray tile walkway to a gate that connects our homes. I call it having my own yellow brick road.

My husband has often been asked what it's been like living next to his in-laws. When my Mom was alive, he would always say that living next to the best Cuban restaurant in town. Our children also loved having Abuela next door, especially when they didn't like the dinner menu at home.

The walkway connecting our homes has always been my road to peace, my road to sanity, on days when I couldn't take another stereo blaring or another Barney video, and the road to sane advice when I wondered if I'd made the right parenting decision.

Entering my parents' home was like stepping into a spa. Tranquility greeted me at the door, along with a kiss and a hug from my parents. Once I was in their home, I wasn't a mom or a wife. I became their little girl again. They would pamper me for a change.

Visiting their home helped refuel me, and a couple of hours with my parents gave me the boost I needed to get going again. The older I get, the more I appreciate everything my parents have

done for my family and me. Their devotion to our family and their views on life have greatly influenced my own. When we're children, we idolize our parents, but as adults, we have the opportunity to know them as they really are.

For some, reaching this point is painful because they realize how little emotional support they have received throughout their lives. I've learned from my parents that parenthood doesn't end when your children get older; it's just that your relationship changes. A parent's role is always important in their child's life, regardless of how old their child becomes.

We have always enjoyed my parents' company. Before my Mom passed, we traveled with them, would often go out to dinner, and most importantly, we knew we could go to them anytime with our problems. No two people have loved and cared for us as they have done.

My dad is 88 now, and the roles have reversed. We see him almost every day, and he is the one who is at our house more often. He watches football with my husband and often sits and tells us stories about his childhood in Cuba.

It is such a blessing that he is healthy and that our grandchildren have been able to know him.

When I look back on my life, I realize that the relationship we have is the fruit of all the moments we have shared.

Life sure does go by fast, and it's hard for me to believe that my children are adults and that I now have the role my parents had when I was raising them. I was always fortunate to be able to walk out my door and down the gray-tiled road to a home where I'm always greeted with an overabundance of love.

I have created the same kind of home for my children. They know, as do my daughters-in-law and my grandchildren, that this home is always open to them to share their happy news and the difficult moments we all go through in life.

Maria Luisa Salcines is a freelance writer, author, and certified parent coach with *The Academy of Parenting Education and Coaching in Redirecting Children's Behavior and Redirecting for a Cooperative Classroom*. Her books, *You Can Do It, Chickadee, and You Can Do It, Tex*, are award-winning children's books about depression and anxiety. Follow her on Instagram at @mlsalcinespoweroffamily and @youcandoitbooks, or contact her on her website, FamilyLifeAndFinding-Happy.com.



CAMP WACHUSETT
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 Phil Williams, Director | 202-744-7130

May



Friday, May 1
FRIDAY BABIES WITH MISS ANNA
 FRIDAY, MAY 1 11:00—11:30 AM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 It's story time, baby! Join Miss Anna for songs, fingerplays, and stories. Extra grown-ups are welcome! Please register everyone in your group so we can make sure there is room for everyone. See you there! Important info:

- This story time is for children under a year old or who are not yet walking. For safety reasons, we cannot accommodate older siblings in this story time.
- Our story times fill up, so we ask you to sign up for only one story time per week, unless you are bringing siblings to sessions for their respective age groups. If you have questions about other possible exceptions, give us a call!
- We know traveling with young kids is difficult, so we never assume that someone running late is not coming. If you can't make story time, please inform us so that we know we can give your spot away to someone else.

You will be asked to confirm on the registration page that you have read and acknowledged this information. These measures help us avoid having to turn people away from story time. Thanks in advance for your understanding and cooperation!
 Registration for this event opens Saturday, April 25 at 9:00 AM.

CREATION STATION
 FRIDAY, MAY 1 11:00 AM—12:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 Experiment with some new types of art, materials, and styles.
 Wear old clothes—sometimes we get messy! Recommended for ages 3-5
 Registration Required
 Late arrivals beyond 10 minutes will not be admitted

Saturday, May 2
LITTLE GROOVE: MUSIC AND MOVEMENT FOR KIDS
 SATURDAY, MAY 2 10:00—11:00 AM Program Room Newburyport Public, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 Little Groove designs their programs to help infants, toddlers, and preschoolers learn and interact with music through sound, sight, and touch. Children enjoy being a part of the musical experience,

using their bodies and voices to sing along to catchy songs that help them build important motor and social skills. They will also have fun using real instruments such as drums, shakers, and tambourines.
 Intended for ages 0-5. Registration is required for all attendees. Please register for everyone in your party (children and adults) so we have an accurate headcount! Our space is limited so if you find you can no longer attend, please cancel your reservation online or by phone so that someone else can attend.

Sunday, May 3
COLLAGE CLUB (TEENS & ADULTS)
 SUNDAY, MAY 3 1:30—3:00 PM Millhendler Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 Craft and chat with your community! All materials are provided, but feel free to bring any of your own.
 Please note that this is the last session of Collage Club! This program may start back up on Sundays in Fall 2026.
 No Registration Required

Tuesday, May 5
COOKIES & COLORING
 TUESDAY, MAY 5 3:00—4:30 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 What could be better than an afternoon of cookies & coloring? Join us to relax with coloring sheets, crayons and markers, and individually wrapped cookies. Drop in any time between 3:00 and 4:30.
 Kids of all ages and abilities are welcome. Please contact the Children's Room if you have concerns about allergies, as we want to provide a safe and enjoyable program for everyone. No Registration Required

LEGO LINK-UP
 TUESDAY, MAY 5 4:00—5:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 "Link-up" with other LEGO lovers and let your creativity flow! Spend the hour creating a LEGO masterpiece!
 Recommended for ages 4-11.
 No Registration Required

BEAUTIFUL BIRD FEEDERS
 TUESDAY, MAY 5 6:00—7:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 Spring has sprung and birds are returning from their winter trip south! Come to the library to make your very own bird feeder

out of biodegradable materials to hang outside and welcome them home!
 Ages 3 - 9 Registration required. Late arrivals beyond 10 minutes will not be admitted.

Wednesday, May 6
D&D 101
 WEDNESDAY, MAY 6 3:00—4:45 PM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 This program is for Tweens & Teens in grades 5-12 who are interested in Dungeons and Dragons. Doors open at 3 but feel free to come by anytime afterwards. Are you a new player who wants to join our library campaign? Do you just want to learn about the world's most popular roleplaying game?? Or, do you just need a place to hangout and play D&D with your friends??? D&D 101 is here to help! These sessions are held on the first Wednesday of every month.
 If you would like to know about all future D&D programs at the library, you can sign up for our mailing list.

Thursday, May 7
Exploration Storytime (2 - 6 year olds)
 THURSDAY, MAY 7 10:30—11:15 AM Side Lawn Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913
 Ages: 2 year - 6 years
 Join Rebecca for in-person storytime in our side yard! This storytime is great for ages 2 to 6 year olds with stories and interactive activities. The end of storytime includes stations set up around the group to explore, create, and learn!
 Program is outdoors so bring a blanket or chair to sit on (we have some as well). Please read our expectations for attendance and we look forward to seeing at Storytime!
 No registration required but program is outdoors so if the weather is bad, this program will be cancelled
 Free No Registration Required

BOARD GAME GROUP: 3RD - 5TH GRADERS
 THURSDAY, MAY 7 3:30—4:45 PM Amesbury Room Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913
 Ages: 3rd - 5th (younger siblings welcome)
 Come by the library for an informal time to play board games with your peers! We'll have board games and some weeks present a new one that you might not have heard of to play!

Registration is required for each week as space is limited in the Amesbury Room. Questions? Contact ys@amesburylibrary.org or 978-388-8148 x4
 Free
 Registration for this event opens Thursday, April 30 at 9:15 AM.

BILINGUAL STORYTIME/ CUENTOS BILINGÜE
 THURSDAY, MAY 7 10:00—11:00 AM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 Designed for children ages 2-6, with a caregiver. Join Moira from Family Connections for stories, songs, and fun in English and Spanish! This playful storytime supports early language learning and celebrates both languages through books, music, and age appropriate activities. Registration required.

Diseñado para niños de 2 a 6 años, acompañados por un adulto. ¡Acompañanos para disfrutar de cuentos, canciones y diversión en inglés y español! Esta hora de cuentos apoya el aprendizaje temprano del idioma a través de libros, música y actividades apropiadas para la edad. Registro requerido.
 Registration for this event opens Thursday, April 23 at 8:00 AM.

PIXEL PLAY
 THURSDAY, MAY 7 4:00—5:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 Ready, set, go! Stop at the library to play some games on the Nintendo Switch. It's a fun and friendly environment to make new friends, test your skills, and enjoy some awesome games. Whether you're a pro or just starting, everyone's welcome to play!
 For ages 6-11 No registration required

Saturday, May 9
CRAFT BUFFET
 SATURDAY, MAY 9 1:00—4:00 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 Stop by our Activity Room, have a snack, and enjoy a variety of simple, no-mess crafts! Drop in any time between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. This program is open to kids of all ages and abilities.
 No Registration Required

Monday, May 11
KIDS' OPEN PLAY
 MONDAY, MAY 11 10:00—11:30 AM Program Room Newburyport Public Library, 94

State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 Drop in any time in between 10:00 and 11:30 a.m. for some non-directed play. We'll have various toys out to promote pretend play and building skills. This program is best suited for ages 0-5, but interested kids of all ages and abilities are welcome.
 No registration required. This program will take place most Mondays through to the end of the summer.
 No Registration Required

OPEN SENSORY PLAY (0 - 23 MONTHS)
 MONDAY, MAY 11 4:00—4:45 PM Side Lawn Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913
 Ages 0 - 23 Months

Alternating with our more formal program of Mother Goose on the Loose, this sensory free play with have sensory items and toys in to interact with and allow for social time for adults and babies alike! This is drop-in any time between 4pm - 4:45pm. Sensory play, and all play, is an essentially learning tool for kids to learn!
 This program is outdoors so dress accordingly. Bring a blanket to sit on!

If the weather is bad, the program will be cancelled. For questions or more information contact the Youth Services Dept at ys@amesburylibrary.org or 978-388-8148 x4
 Want to stay informed of upcoming programs? Sign up for the newsletter HERE
 Free No Registration Required

EDIBLE FINGER PAINTING FOR BABIES
 MONDAY, MAY 11 11:00 AM—12:00 PM

Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 This sensory-rich activity allows babies to explore textures, colors, and creativity through safe, edible finger paints. This serves as a fun, interactive way for your little one to start expressing themselves through art while also socializing with other babies. Stop by for a few minutes or the whole hour. Be sure to bring a change of clothes as this will get messy!
 For ages 0 -12 months
 Registration required
 Registration for this event opens Monday, April 27 at 8:00 AM.

Tuesday, May 12
POKEMON CLUB!
 TUESDAY, MAY 12 3:00—4:30 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 Do you like Pokemon? Would you like to hang out with other kids who like Pokemon? Drop in for our Pokemon Club! You can bring your cards, see what others have, or play Pokemon. No prior knowledge is necessary.
 For grades K-5. Siblings are welcome. Grown-ups, please be advised: we request that attendees don't trade cards unless their adult is there to say it's okay.
 No Registration Required

Wednesday, May 13
STORIES IN THE GARDEN (OFFSITE)
 WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 11:00 AM—12:00 PM Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor

Center 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA, 01950
 Come catch the reading bug! Join us at the Parker River NWR Visitor Center for a children's story hour in the pollinator garden. Listen to stories then do a hands-on craft or take a self-guided walk to see the animals at Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. The garden features a large stone seating area, but please feel free to bring your own picnic blanket or lawn chairs. No registration required.
 This program is not at the library. The address for this program is 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA 01950.
 No Registration Required

MEET MAX AT THE LIBRARY
 WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 2:00—2:30 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 Stop by the library to meet Max the Comfort Dog, part of Haverhill Police Department.
 Max's mission is to provide comfort, support, and positive engagement to individuals and communities who may benefit most, including people with mental health needs, disabilities, or difficult life circumstances. Max also supports officer wellness and helps foster trust, connection, and well-being within the community.
 Registration required.
 Registration for this event opens Wednesday, April 29 at 8:00 AM.

Thursday, May 14
BUBBLE-OLGY
 THURSDAY, MAY 14 4:00—5:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 How do you make bubbles? What makes them float? Learn how to make your own bubble solution! Experiment with different solutions to see what will make the biggest bubbles or float the longest.
 Ages 8-12 Registration required
 Registration for this event opens Thursday, April 30 at 8:00 AM.

Saturday, May 16
FIDGET FACTORY
 SATURDAY, MAY 16 2:00—3:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 Come make your own stress ball! Fill your balloon with colorful beads, and watch them grow. Perfect for fidgeting, calming down, or just plain fun!
 For ages 6-11
 Registration Required. Late arrivals beyond 10 minutes will not be admitted.
 Registration for this event opens Saturday, May 2 at 6:00 AM.

Monday, May 18
FLOWERPOT PAINTING
 MONDAY, MAY 18 4:00—5:00 PM Cavallaro Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830
 April showers bring May flowers, and these flowerpots will be the perfect place to grow them! Come decorate a flowerpot



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however you want with acrylic paint, take home a packet of seed to plant in it, and watch your may flowers grow!

Ages 6 - 11 Registration required. Late arrivals beyond 10 minutes will not be admitted. Registration for this event opens Monday, May 4 at 8:00 AM.

Tuesday, May 19

LITTLE GROOVE MUSIC FOR LITTLE ONES
TUESDAY, MAY 19 10:30—11:15 AM Side Lawn Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913

Best for ages 0 - 4 years old (and their caregivers!) Join Little Groove Music for a fun music class in our outdoor programming space. You'll be moving and grooving, dancing and swaying as little ones sing and jam out. Bring a blanket to sit on and have some fun! This program is outdoors and subject to change with the weather!

No registration required.

Thank you to Amesbury Cultural Council for funding this series of music program. No pets, only service animals are welcome at our programs

Free No Registration Required

Wednesday, May 20

HOMESCHOOL ART EXPLORATION
WEDNESDAY, MAY 20 10:30—11:30 AM Side Lawn Amesbury Public Library 149 Main St., Amesbury, MA, 01913
Suggested age range 5 - 12 (although older children could enjoy any of these)
Come by our outdoor programming space to explore different artists and do a project

inspired by their work. There will be stations around with supplies, a picture book biography to read, and library staff to assist with instructions. Families can visit each station and work on whatever holds their interest. This program requires registration so we know how many families for which to prepare. This program is outdoors and could be messy so dress accordingly. This program is also subject to the weather. For more information, please contact the Youth Services' Department at ys@amesburylibrary.org or 978-388-8148x4. Sign up for our email newsletter

TEEN CRAFTERNOON: PAINT A CERAMIC SNAIL

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20 4:00—5:00 PM Cavallo Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830

Paint a ceramic snail and place it in an outdoor space or use to decorate your room!
Ages 11-18

Registration for this event opens Friday, May 1 at 8:00 AM.

Thursday, May 21

MIDDLE GRADE BOOK CLUB (AGES 8-12)
THURSDAY, MAY 21 3:30—4:30 PM Children's Activity Room Newburyport Public Library, 94 State Street, Newburyport, MA,
Not sure what to read next? Looking for a fun after-school activity? Check out our Middle Grade Book Club (Ages 8-12)! Each month we'll meet to discuss a different book, play games, and eat snacks.
On May 21st we'll meet to discuss "Impos-

sible Creatures" by Katherine Rundell. Call the library or log in to your MVLC account to request a copy of the book today!

"The day that Christopher saved a drowning baby griffin from a hidden lake would change his life forever.

It's the day he learned about the Archipelago—a cluster of unmapped islands where magical creatures of every kind have thrived for thousands of years, until now. And it's the day he met Mal—a girl on the run, in desperate need of his help.

Mal and Christopher embark on a wild adventure, racing from island to island, searching for someone who can explain why the magic is fading and why magical creatures are suddenly dying. They consult sphinxes, battle kraken, and negotiate with dragons. But the closer they get to the dark truth of what's happening, the clearer it no one else can fix this. If the Archipelago is to be saved, Mal and Christopher will have to do it themselves."

Registration is requested (so we can plan snacks accordingly!) but drop-ins are also welcome. Caregivers are not required to stay for this program but kids should know how to get in touch with an adult should the need arise.

Wednesday, May 27

STORIES IN THE GARDEN (OFFSITE)
WEDNESDAY, MAY 27 11:00 AM—12:00 PM Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA, 01950

Come catch the reading bug! Join us at

the Parker River NWR Visitor Center for a children's story hour in the pollinator garden. Listen to stories then do a hands-on craft or take a self-guided walk to see the animals at Spencer-Peirce-Little Farm. The garden features a large stone seating area, but please feel free to bring your own picnic blanket or lawn chairs. No registration required. This program is not at the library.

The address for this program is 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport, MA 01950.
No Registration Required

SATURDAY, MAY 30

PK Parent Child Play

SATURDAY, MAY 30 10:00—11:00 AM Cavallo Room Haverhill Public Library 99 Main Street, Haverhill, MA, 01830

Join Nicole from Family Connections for a fun and interactive playtime designed for preschoolers (age 2-5) and their caregivers. Together, you'll explore age-appropriate toys and activities that encourage early learning, creativity, and social skills. This supportive space fosters bonding, play, and school readiness in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

Registration required

Registration for this event opens Saturday, May 16 at 8:00 AM

Please send any events you would like considered for the Calendar of Events to Editor@merrimackvalleyparent.com



Don't Miss Our Summer Camps & Schools Section

In the February - June Issues

To Advertise Contact:
Mike@merrimackvalleyparent.com