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JUNE 2020

How to Properly Wear a Face Mask

**Q&A**  
from an Expert

**10**  
WAYS *to*  
Keep Kids  
READING

**GUITAR MEN**

How One Dad is Bonding with his Sons During Quarantine



*plus:* happy mama: mental health matters pg 12

time management tips for new dads p.10 humor: wants vs needs p.16



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**MEMBERS OF**



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**Family Harmony:** Justin Leland and his son Connor have better connected over a love of music and DIY projects during quarantine. For more on their family and guitar-making journey, turn to page 8.

The Lelands were photographed at home in May by KCFM Publisher LJ Radon.



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dear reader



Vaun Thygerson,  
Contributing Writer

I feel like a celebrity! I have been in more parades this past month than in my entire life; because it's become the new way to celebrate special occasions during this pandemic. These parades are so much fun. The first one I went to was for my son's good friend, who was turning 14, and I thought the idea was brilliant. We went all out and decorated our car with window paint, made a poster, and blew up a giant bouquet of balloons that floated through our sunroof. The birthday boy stood on the yard and waved at everyone and accepted gifts from the car windows. The honking from the cars and the yelling from participants made it seem like a real party!

From there, we celebrated my good friend's 50th birthday, a couple of Sweet Sixteen celebrations, two pre-teen girls' birthdays, and a few high school graduates. My son, who is a rising Junior, was the recipient of Liberty High School's teacher and administration parade where they drove by to congratulate their students. We loved seeing the teachers' cars all decorated and the Patriot mascot even make an appearance. The real treat was his PE coach blasting his signature AC/DC song from his car. It seems like such a small thing, but in this age of COVID-19, it was a HUGE gesture!

One thing this shelter in place culture has given us is more time to be with our loved ones. In the article, "Family Harmony: How One Local Dad and Son Connected Through Music and Guitar-Making" on page 8, you will see how Justin Leland and his 13-year-old son Connor made memories while not only making music but building their guitars together. This dynamic duo can be seen on this month's cover celebrating the wonderful dads we honor on this Father's Day. And don't forget to celebrate the amazing fathers and father figures in your lives on Sunday, June 21st.

For your monthly dose of humor, Julie Willis's Humor at Home article, "What I WANT When I'm Stuck at Home (Hint: It's Ice Cream) And What I NEED While I'm Stuck at Home (Hint: It's Not Ice Cream)," on page 16, she writes about how lucky we were to have the quarantine hit in the 2020s versus the 1980s because we have so many more choices and opportunities at just a click away. Although her family has fared pretty well during quarantine, she wants a do-over so that she can go back to March 1st to become better prepared and ready for the stay-at-home order.

I think we can all agree that none of us were prepared for what the last few months brought into our lives, and I agree with Julie Willis and would love a do over too! Thankfully, the proverbial light is at the end of the tunnel, and we are starting to reopen our economy and return to some normalcy. I'm not too anxious to let my life get quite so hectic. I have enjoyed this slower pace, and I want to continue the small pleasures that meant so much to us during the pandemic: a quick note from a teacher, a gift dropped off on your neighbor's porch, and a parade where a honk said it all! Hopefully, we will get to celebrate Father's Day in person with those we love!

## See Your Name in Lights For a Good Cause

The Historic Fox Theater, which has been in the heart of downtown Bakersfield since 1930, is accepting marquee submissions for July, so you can see your name and/or message in lights to help a good cause. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic,



photo from thebakersfieldfox.com

the theater had to close its doors, so one way they can recoup some of their financial loss is through community donations. When the theater first offered this service, the marquee submissions sold out for May and June, but July is now available.

Whether it's an inspirational quote, lyrics from a song, a special graduation message, or a birthday wish, the Fox Theater's marquee will keep your message up for 24 hours for \$200. For an additional \$100, the theater's marquee will light up your message in neon for an hour at sunset.

For more information, please email [info@bakersfieldfox.com](mailto:info@bakersfieldfox.com) with the subject line **Marquee Inspired**.

## Kern Community Foundation's COVID-19 Relief Fund Gets \$100,000 From Kern Health Systems

Kern Community Foundation's COVID-19 Relief Fund gets an additional \$100,000 from Kern Health Systems, which enabled the Foundation to award grants to nine nonprofits responding to basic needs. This Fund launched in late March to help meet the extraordinary needs of local nonprofits dealing with ongoing health and financial crises caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic.

"Over the past 8 weeks, Kern Community Foundation has received 140 applications requesting \$1.8 million from local nonprofits that are experiencing negative financial impacts due to the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the demand for many of their services increasing significantly," says Foundation President and CEO Kristen Beall Watson. "We are always proud of how our community comes together to meet the essential needs of neighbors during challenging times like these, and we applaud Kern Health Systems for their generous gift to recharge our fund so that our grant-making work can continue.

Grant recipients in the latest funding round include: Alliance Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault, Bakersfield-Kern Regional Homeless Collaborative, Bakersfield Senior Center, Bakersfield Homeless Center, Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County, California Farmworker Foundation, Community Action Partnership of Kern Food Bank, The Mission at Kern County, and Wounded Heroes Fund.

Further support from the community is welcome. To contribute a secure, tax-deductible donation to the Fund, please visit [www.kernfoundation.org](http://www.kernfoundation.org) or call 661-325-5436.

## Kern County's M Street Navigation Center Now Open

M Street Navigation Center, 2900 M Street, owned by County of Kern and operated by Community Action Partnership of Kern, recently opened to help people experiencing homelessness. The Center is designed to be a 24-hour facility providing shelter, beds, meals, laundry services, medical assessment, and pet care to unsheltered individuals who face significant barriers. Due to COVID 19, some services are currently limited, but plan on being provided once restrictions are lifted.

For more information, please visit <http://www.capk.org/m-street-navigation-center/>.

## Cloud 9 Coffee Company Wants to Hear Your Good News

A local coffee store's outdoor install encourages the community to support one another while maintaining social distance. Cloud 9 Coffee Company, at 5060 California Ave, Suite 130, has created a way for people to

celebrate good news, ask for a prayer request, share quotes, or post anything that brings a smile. This large, customized board will feature notecards from people displayed for all to share. Note cards will be available and pens will be sanitized after each use.



"I'm really excited for this because I'm hoping it will turn people's attention to the GOOD in the world instead of the fear, anxiety, and bad," says Morgan Bonn, owner of Cloud 9 Coffee Company. "I love Bakersfield and I'm excited to have yet another reason to interact with the community."

For more information, visit their Instagram account [@cloud9coffeeco](https://www.instagram.com/cloud9coffeeco).

## Summer Products We ❤️

For more product reviews, visit [nappaawards.com](http://nappaawards.com)

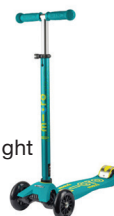
### Rainbow Ring Play Center

Transform your backyard into a water park. Includes a slide, wading pool, water sprayer, ring toss, ball roller and toss ball games. Attaches to a garden hose to keep kids cool all summer. **\$54.99, ages 2+, intex-corp.com**



### Micro Maxi Deluxe Scooter

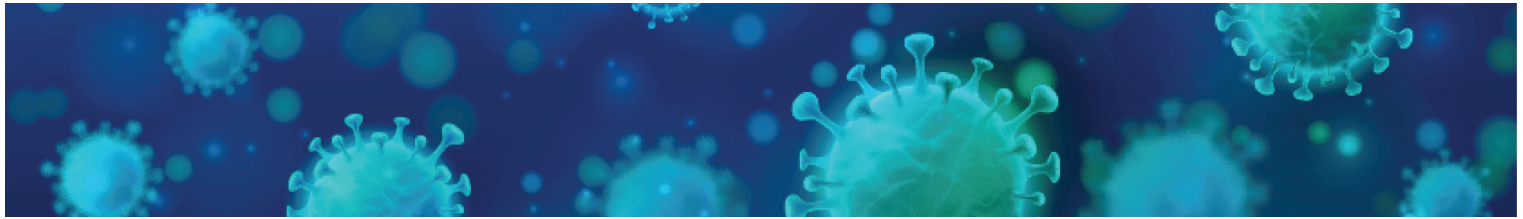
A three-wheeled, lean-to-steer design, offers a stable ride that supports children as they curve and carve the sidewalk. Lightweight with an adjustable T-handlebar. **\$139.99, ages 5-12, microkickboard.com**



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# Expert Advice: Public Health Expert Answers Four Questions About COVID-19

By Callie Collins

Parenting in a pandemic brings up a variety of doubts. Our readers join caretakers across the globe with anxieties right now, some of which can be alleviated with science from a reliable source.

Dr. Steve Alder, professor of family and preventive medicine at the University of Utah, specializes in public health. He offered expert advice on four topics that matter to families at this critical period.

**Q.** Questions about masks and their effectiveness loom large in parents' minds now. Should families use masks for going out in their neighborhoods, in public gatherings, or at school this fall?

**A.** I doubt any of us realized that masks would become a new part of our wardrobes this year.

While there are many types of masks that are used to help avoid infection, the ones that are most commonly used will help prevent the wearer from exposing those around them. This is important because people who have COVID-19 can infect others even if they don't have any signs or symptoms of this illness.

Mask use is recommended when people from different households are going to be around each other, especially if social-distancing (being able to stay at least six feet apart) is not possible.

Schools around the country are working on plans for reopening, including whether masks are required, so it is important to stay in communication with your local school to know what they will be requesting from their students and visitors.

*Editor's note: District guidance based on the guidance from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention is expected later this summer.*

**Q.** What precautions do you recommend for families at this phase of the pandemic?

**A.** Across the country, and throughout much of the world, communities are trying to find ways to function as normally as possible while trying to limit transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). It is very important to keep updated on the guidelines that health leaders in your community are asking you to follow.

In general, social distancing when possible, frequent hand-washing, wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose – especially when social distancing is not possible – and staying home and isolated when feeling ill are recommended. It is also important to cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and wash surfaces regularly, especially if they are touched by multiple people. A good source for up-to-date information regarding COVID-19, including how you can protect your family, can be found at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

**Q.** If you could clear one up one myth about COVID-19 for families, what would that be? What do you wish parents better understood about the pandemic overall?

**A.** There are no treatments or vaccines for COVID-19. There are a lot of ideas being shared about a variety of ways to either prevent or cure this disease, but to date, no treatment or preventive therapy has been fully tested for effectiveness.

The best approaches for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic are to practice good preventive behaviors and stay healthy – healthy eating, staying active, getting enough sleep and washing hands frequently.

Trying unproven approaches is risky, leading to severe health problems in some cases.



Dr. Alder and Family

**Q.** How can families best help support the work of frontline workers in their community?

**A.** First and foremost, following guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and encouraging others to do the same is a way to be supportive. This approach will help limit the activity of the infection in their community and keep healthcare systems, and the frontline workers, from being overwhelmed.

Frontline healthcare workers are amazing individuals who are dedicated to helping others stay as healthy as possible. Families can help them by reducing the number of people that need to be hospitalized at any one time due to COVID-19.

The best thing we all can do is to do those things which will keep us healthy and then help those around us to stay healthy as well.



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# MEALS PROGRAM

**7 DAYS A WEEK**

To reduce the frequency that families have to leave their home to pick up meals, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County will be providing "supper" along with "breakfast" for the following day at each of their "grab and go" meal service locations starting on March 23, 2020. Also, to meet the needs of feeding children on the weekends, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County will expand their food service program to include weekend meal service for children on Saturday and Sundays beginning on March 28, 2020.

Meals will be made available to all children without any eligibility documentation, who are 18 years of age and younger during the COVID-19 crisis. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. For more information, call 661-325-3730 or [bgclubsofkerncounty.org/covid-19](http://bgclubsofkerncounty.org/covid-19).

## LOCATIONS

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Lamont, Ca 93241  
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Arvin Children's Center  
800 Walnut Drive  
Arvin, Ca 93203  
Meal Service (2:00 PM)

Lamont Club  
8301 Segrue Road  
Lamont, Ca 93241  
Meal Service (3:00 PM)

Armstrong Youth Center  
801 Niles Street  
Bakersfield, Ca 93305  
Meal Service (3:00 PM)

Stockdale Club  
5207 Young Street  
Bakersfield, Ca 93311  
Meal Service (3:00 PM)





**F**ather and son hobbies, like woodworking, playing music together, and discovering a mutual affinity for older songs, may be less common in the age of phones and social media. One local dad has made the most of the internet and California's shelter-in-place order, however, to share his love of music with his teenage son.

When local KBAK Fox 58 affiliate "Bakersfield Now" contacted Justin Leland to report on his hobbies, he admits feeling surprised and a little perplexed.

"I have to admit, my first thought was 'Well, this must be a really slow news day,' but then I realized, 'This must be because of the drastic situation we're all in right now, with no clear end in sight,'" said Justin. "This kind of fits the bill for a feel-good story."

Leland recently posted photos to his personal Facebook account that showed a guitar he made from a kit purchased online. His son, Connor, 13, saw it come together and expressed interest in assembling his own guitar.

"One of my friends sent the post along to local news," said Justin. "I had posted them online for friends and family who can't see the boys right now, grandparents who are 100 miles away, to keep up with them during an indefinite lockdown."

Before long, local media was knocking at his door to film as Connor finished his guitar.

"I wanted to spend time with my Dad and learn with him," said Connor. "It took about 10 hours. I learned about sanding, painting, and a little about the electronics."

### How it All Started

Justin Leland, a financial advisor, local radio show contributor on 96.1's radio show "Moneywise Guys," and father of three, may not be known for music or woodworking, but he's clearly a dedicated dad making the most of time with his sons.

"I'm not a great musician, no. I've played the guitar since high school not because I'm good at it, but because I like it," he said. "I played at church as a teenager, but the way life goes, you lose hobbies after you have kids sometimes. It's all work, work, work. Then you get home and take care of kids, change diapers, give them what they need. I lost some of that skill and there were times I played less, but I never quit."

Justin has been working from home during the pandemic for the past two months.



# FAMILY HARMONY



## How One Local Dad and Son Connected Through Music and Guitar-Making

By Callie Collins



“My job keeps me really busy, but in quarantine, there’s just a little bit more time to reflect and to occasionally work on something else,” said Justin. “I already had a guitar here that I’d take out from time to time, but with that little bit of extra time, I thought ‘Hey, I’ll build one. Connor saw it and wanted to build one too.’”

## Building Strong Connections

Justin laughed at the idea that he might have had some underlying woodworking talent or significant experience.

“Honestly, very little. Basically, it’s just a kit you put together and for \$150 to \$200, you can buy a pretty decent one on Amazon. It’s not difficult on the woodworking. You’d maybe need a scroll saw, a sander, and basic knowledge of how to sand, stain and prime,” he explained. “The body of the guitar is already created. The holes where the pick-ups are supposed to go are already there. You sand it, paint it and make it how you like and it’s good to go. A guitar can be a weekend project.”

At the time of this interview, Justin was expecting the delivery of a third guitar kit from Amazon, which he predicts will be the family’s last.

Connor is headed to eighth grade at a local middle school next fall, where he will play the flute in marching band.

“We saw that love of music from a young age,” said Justin. “Connor always wanted to do something musical. Whenever there was music on in the car, he gravitated toward it. At Christmastime, when he was 5, we got him a drum set that died a slow, painful death, because he was playing it too hard. And, it was driving us nuts, because it was a little bit too loud. He tried out the guitar but never really learned how to play it. Then, Connor started the flute in elementary school and started marching band in sixth grade.”

Justin’s pride in Connor was evident as he explained his son’s progress. Sharing music, from classic rock ‘n roll that Justin loves to the ‘90s-era alternative rock like Red Hot Chili Peppers and Nirvana that Connor prefers, is something the father and son can also share.

“When I can show him the chord progression on that particular song or have him ad lib and get that musicality down, that’s when it feels like something special,” said Justin. “He’ll always have a guitar with his own name on it.”

## All in the Family

Justin’s active role with his kids doesn’t stop with just his middle son. He makes an effort to find what his sons are interested in and connect on their level.

Later this summer, he hopes to participate in a 50-mile backpacking trip in New Mexico that he and oldest son, JT, 17, have been training for all year.

“JT’s way is more being outdoors, hiking, camping, getting dirty. The music has been more of a Dad and Connor thing. Brandon is 3 so that’s still very

young but I’m on the lookout for if he’s going to be interested in sports or just what exactly,” said Justin. “You’ve got to find a way to be able to bond and connect with them.”

Knowing how to discover your child’s talents and interests may be different for every family, but Justin’s best advice is to listen to your kids.

“Understand what they’re good at and what they’re passionate about. There are other avenues to help guide that passion. Be open to that. Not every kid is going to be able to go out into the garage and make a guitar. Accept that,” he said. “All are completely different human beings with different strengths, weaknesses, and passions.”

Even when teens cannot seem to talk with their parents about anything else, perhaps a shared interest may be just the common ground they need.



*Justin, Connor, Brandon and JT Leland at home in Bakersfield.  
Photos courtesy of the Leland family.*

As for Connor, he lists his favorite band as Led Zeppelin and recommends kids also check in with their parents about interests and hobbies they could enjoy together.

“Just ask them to see if they’d be interested in it first,” said Connor.

Although the teen is ready to see friends and wants to go watch a movie when quarantine ends, he admits this time has been memorable because of the time spent with his dad and the making of the guitar.

Spending more time with family is a rare positive in the COVID-19 pandemic, sometimes with creative efforts, too. What may seem simple to adults has a way of forming childhood memories for the household’s youngest members.

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**If you have a story to share about unique quarantine activities, email [callie@kerncountyfamily.com](mailto:callie@kerncountyfamily.com) for editorial consideration.**



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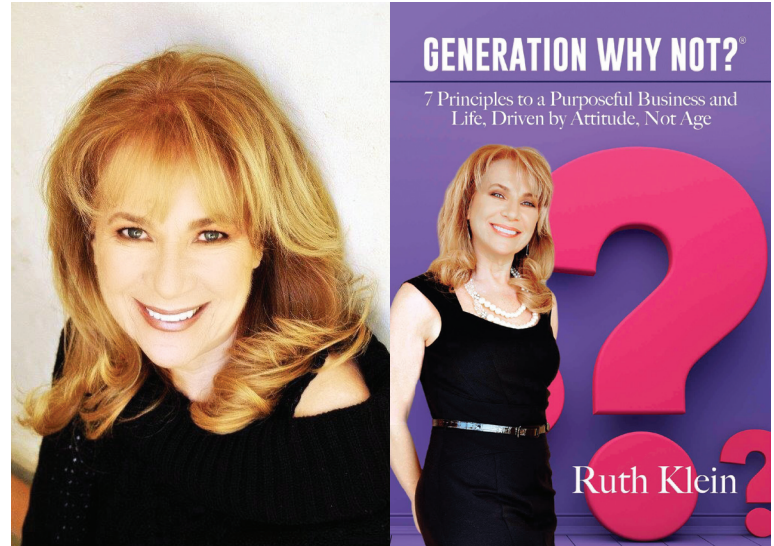
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*celebrating dads* .....

# Time Management, Sleep & Life with a Newborn



Ruth Klein, left, and her new book, *Generation Why Not?*, right

## Advice for new dads from a local author and productivity expert. By Callie Collins

**P**arents everywhere seem to nod and agree when it comes to one key parenting principle: the days are long, but the years are short. Father's Day is Sunday, June 21, and dads too know all about long days, longer nights, and how fast time goes by with little ones at home, especially as a new parent.

Managing a changed routine, a relationship, and how to be a great father are important issues new fathers face with answers that can feel uncertain. An abundance of information and an almost equal variety of opinions exist on social media, with its odd mix of community and divisiveness, but few would argue against new parenthood's unique blend of exhaustion.

Despite collective advice, there is simply no rulebook for how to be a new father. Bringing home Baby also means a new family dynamic, often rife with sleepless nights.

While there are many kinds of families, and some may include relatives or paid staff who also provide reprieve, having a newborn at home is a uniquely challenging phase of life. Mom's role is often clear, even as she adjusts and heals, but Dad's role may be less apparent.

"The new dad's job is to be there and be helpful," said Ruth Klein, time management expert, author of six books, and mother of three children. "The more a new dad helps the new mom, the happier Mom will be. Because the mom is physiologically healing and has this whole new emotional world, the mother seems to have a deeper level of connection with the child for obvious reasons. A new father thinks he's helping and he is—but he needs to do more."



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Klein is a renowned productivity coach with degrees in psychology, clinical psychology and spiritual psychology. Her advice has reached national audiences through outlets like Oprah's "O Magazine," "Readers Digest" and other standout media, but she calls California home.

"Being there and being helpful is what Dad should do to bring harmony," said Klein. "He will have a ridiculously appreciative wife, but this is a time when real patience and compassion from Dad with Mom has to happen."

The new dad's job is to be there and be helpful," said Ruth Klein, time management expert, "The more a new dad helps the new mom, the happier Mom will be... A new father thinks he's helping and he is—but he needs to do more."

Simply not knowing how to take care of a newborn and what is happening with the mother's postpartum recovery may be part of the challenge for new fathers.

"Many times, men freak out in this situation because they don't know what to do so they keep their distance so as not to upset mom or hurt the baby," said Klein. "Mom may also be a bit temperamental and moody. She may be upset in ways that Dad is not used to or those ways are bigger and more in your face than what he's used to, which is normal. Hormones are trying to get back to homeostasis and normalcy, and for some women, it takes longer than others."



Newborns are known for keeping parents on a limited sleep schedule, usually waking every two hours to eat for at least the first month of life.

"The baby is going to cry a lot. Mom is exhausted, Dad is exhausted. The last thing you want is to listen to, much less deal with, a crying baby," said Klein. "Unless the new father has been around babies a lot in the past in a caretaker role, it can be a whole new life."

## Ways to Help: Ten Tips for New Fathers

**1. Go with the flow and expect the unexpected:** This is Klein's number one suggestion. "Be grateful for it. Just that intention will make life go so much more smoothly. Even second children are a once-in-a-

lifetime event because you've never had this same baby. Look at the child in awe and stay in there."

**2. Make a plan:** "Just as a family plans their financial life, I think it's really important that a husband and wife plan what it'll be like once the baby is born," said Klein. "Chart a path for the first three months of a newborn. It would at least help to define what Mom and Dad want and need. Our needs must be met. Our wants are nice if they're met, but in this critical period, get through the needs. Mom will have more needs."

**3. Be present for Mom and participate:** "Dad just knows, when he comes home from work, he is going to be participatory until the child goes down for the night," said Klein. "Somehow, we're able to muster those last vestiges of energy, because when we know that it'll last for two hours or whatever, then you can relax."

**4. Know that a baby's crying has a purpose and pay attention to what the baby needs:** "There are only so many reasons a baby is crying: colic, indigestion, hunger, being tired, needing a clean diaper, or being in pain," said Klein. "What if instead of just being annoyed with the crying, we had a new perception and said 'Okay, Baby isn't hungry, so let's see if she's dry and clean. It could be colic. She could be needing to be burped, or she's tired or possibly in pain for another reason.' Go from there."

**5. Accept that nights will be difficult:** "Just know going in that the first four weeks are going to be tough," said Klein. "This is where it really helps for men to help out. Men have got to get up. Bring the baby to mom to nurse or give the baby a bottle. Mom needs you to do that, not only for herself but for the baby. It is what it is. Mom dealt through the whole pregnancy. You deal now. It's four to six weeks of bad sleep, barring complications, generally speaking. You know what you're in for; recognize that."

**6. Take a ride in the car:** Klein suggested taking a break by getting everyone into the car, a step that often lulls newborns to sleep, too. "Sometimes, going for a drive is absolutely not what you want to do, but it gives you two time to talk," she explained. "That's quality time even though you're exhausted. This magical thing happens where the baby drifts off, and you can reconnect with each other. Then you can figure out which of the two can put the baby down without waking him up when you get home."

**7. Buy a rocking chair:** "Babies love that motion," said Klein. "A rocking chair can help you both get sleep in the long run, because it creates a routine before the baby goes to sleep. And it's the closest motion to the car you're going to get in your house."

**8. Manage communication:** "In the long run, managing time is really about managing energy. Communication is energy," said Klein. "Life goes better when we have more loving communication. Ask Mom what she needs and do it."

**9. Expect the relationship to change and let go of obsessive thoughts:** "There is another person taking your wife's attention. She's tired, he's tired, they're cranky. Expect these kinds of things," Klein confided. "Obsessive thinking like 'I don't know if this relationship is going to work now.' What if, what if, what if...' Just let it go."

**10. Give her a Father's Day experience:** "What is the best gift a baby daddy can give a baby mommy? And how can you get a happy husband?," she said with a laugh. "By having a happy wife. Be participatory. Connect with the child."

Find more advice from Ruth Klein at [www.ruthklein.com](http://www.ruthklein.com).



# Your Mental Health Matters

*Hello Mama! How are you?*

No really, how are you right now as you read these words? For me, the past few months have been a rollercoaster of emotions. Just when I felt like I was catching my breath, a new wave of mandates, expectations and uncertain circumstances would hit and almost knock me down. There have been many days when I personally struggled with grief, anxiety and depression (not all at the same, but the feelings were present). I could feel the heavy weight of the world and it would cause my body to ache with real pain. I have become very familiar with the feelings of grief after losing my mom to Alzheimer's.

Maybe you have experienced a similar loss of a loved one. Maybe you are experiencing the loss of a job, the loss of connecting with your family or friends or maybe you are experiencing these feelings for the very first time. Whatever you may be feeling right now, your loss and your mental health, matters. If ever there was a time to check in on your mental health, it's now, during this global pandemic. That's why I wanted to focus this article on therapy that we can share, together.

Meet **Melissa Delis, LMFT & Holly Graham, LMFT** and Co-Owners of Virtual Therapy Live. I recently spoke with Melissa and Holly about the Covid-19 crisis and how we can learn to better navigate our emotions during these very uncertain times.

**Janelle:** As a mom of three, this quarantine has been a challenge on our entire family. Home-schooling felt more like, "crisis schooling" while juggling demands of working from home and in the office. What suggestions can you give families to better cope with the extra stress from everyone forced to "stay home" during this quarantine?



**Melissa:** This absolutely is crisis schooling and should not be misconstrued with traditional homeschooling. Many parents and caregivers have been thrown into a role of educator literally overnight; which is quite different from families who typically homeschool their children with methodical schedules already in place. Breathe, exhale, and examine the expectations you are placing upon yourself.

First, recognize the many roles you find yourself having to adjust to: partner or spouse, parent, caregiver, worker, educator, friend, etc. Rather than leaning into the fear, vulnerability, and the stress of our current situation, remind yourself that you have control over specific things including your perception of how you choose to see your situation.

Tell yourself, "I can find a way to balance the roles I have before me and I choose to make the best of the gifts that life is presenting me with right now."

Second, set a schedule and follow routines that work for your kids. Consistency creates calm in times of stress. Children, especially younger kids fare far better when certainty is present, when they know what is happening and when. Create a routine around waking up, eating, daily assignments, play time, etc. Keep it simple; create tasks/goals to things they can easily accomplish. Validate victories, however small they may seem. Positive reinforcement and validation build a child's self-esteem as well as their sense of control and mastery. We can't control many of the things happening within the world but we can create our own narrative and routine within our home.

Talk to them and let them know that everyone has a part within the family. Creating a sense of "we-ness" helps children feel included and a sense of influence within the family dynamic. When the world is chaotic, home is a safe harbor.

Third, manage their anxieties by answering questions they may have surrounding the pandemic. Creating spaces in your conversations to check in with them and discuss any worries or concerns they may be experiencing.

Ask open-ended questions, "What was the biggest emotion you felt today? What was your high/low experience for the day? What's something you were grateful for today?"

**Holly:** Also, reframing the narrative surrounding many of the stories they may be seeing from fear and loss to altruistic stories of how communities come together in times hardship. As Fred Rogers would say, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

Limit the consumption of news surrounding the pandemic. For older children, set parameters



**Holly Graham, LMFT**

on their devices and discuss with them self-monitoring of emotional changes they feel when watching news or stories about the pandemic. Encourage them to follow accounts that are enriching or interesting such as crafts, sports, art, or music. For younger children turn off the news and don't talk about it when they are present.

Manage your anxieties as they arise and accept that it is completely normal right now for our emotions to vary given the circumstances. How we manage our emotions actually models to our children a blueprint for emotional regulation. When you feel overwhelmed give yourself permission to take a break. Breathe, take a shower, go outside and get some fresh air, turn on some music, reset and return to the task at hand when you feel settled.

Remember, we do have control over our own actions and how we choose to walk through this season of COVID.

Maybe even ask yourself, "How do I want my children to remember this pandemic?"

If my actions and emotions model a blueprint to my children; then, I want them to look back at this, not as a period of trauma but rather as a time my family shared love and cohesion.

Oh Mama, that says it all doesn't it? How do you want to remember this time? We can't control the Coronavirus but we can control how we respond to the circumstances and emotions surrounding this pandemic.

**I believe we can be both vulnerable and strong with our children. We can show them our real emotions and we can model how to get through a crisis.**

For me, I definitely want my kids to look back at this time with memories of more family meals around the dinner table, more moments of connection and more than anything, more moments of love. I believe we can be both vulnerable and strong with our children. We can show them our real emotions and we can model how to get through a crisis. If you have a therapist, please continue to seek support, but if you don't, I highly encourage that you find one.

If you're not comfortable with traditional in-person therapy, I highly recommend Virtual Therapy Live created by Melissa and Holly, two Kern County moms and licensed marriage family therapists. Virtual Therapy Live is a network of licensed, accredited and experienced therapists who provide online face-to-face therapy sessions. The cornerstone of their practice is relationships. They will take the time to listen and work collaboratively to help you and your family, navigate through the challenges that life presents. **You can learn more at: [www.virtualtherapylive.com](http://www.virtualtherapylive.com).**

Mama, your mental health matters. Take time to check in with yourself and be honest with your feelings. And remember that you are a warrior! You have survived 100% of the storms that you have faced in this life. You will get through these challenging times, too.

Let's keep this conversation going on social. Tag Kern County Family Magazine with #hellohappymama and let me know what you are doing for your mental health.



"A child who reads will be an adult who thinks." - Sasha Salmina

# 10 Ways to Keep Children Reading this Summer



**The** Summer Slide is a term educators use to refer to the loss of learning and tendency to forget grade-level material during time away from school. This year's unexpected transition to distance learning means the period outside the classroom is unusually long. Keeping kids learning away from the traditional school setting is more important now than ever.

Reading is one way to help kids discover the world around them without leaving home. Whether you're discovering a new series together or encouraging independent reading, children of all ages benefit from books.

Readaloud.org reports the positive correlation between being read aloud to in early childhood with graduating from college later in life. In fact, it's the number one predictor of college attendance, according to child development experts. Currently, readaloud.org's most recent survey data indicates that only 48 percent of children under the age of 5 are read aloud to each day.

Find more information about the benefits of reading and additional tips at [www.readaloud.org](http://www.readaloud.org).

## Here are 10 ways to keep children reading over the next few months and beyond:

**1. Find a book they love and that you do, too:** No matter the age, reading is a great way to connect. Whether it's with a toddler or a teen, you can find common ground with a shared story you both treasure. You can even text your older kids to start a virtual book club.

**2. Indulge their interests:** Sometimes, children enjoy a genre totally different than what we would ever choose. Your child's choices might surprise you but give him or her free reign to choose a new book and decide what to read next.

**3. Don't insist on "War and Peace."** Classics can be an excellent choice and fine literature will have its day with your child. In the meantime, make your peace with "Captain Underpants," "Harry Potter," and other reading fare on the lighter side of literature selections.

**4. Dedicate reading time each day:** Turn off screens and host a read-in for a set period of time each day, such as 30 minutes to peruse a book. Picture-walking, in which kids who may or may not be independent readers but just sit and turn pages to see illustrations, counts, too. Foster that time by dedicating it to just books, with reading aloud, reading quietly, or looking through stories.

**5. Show them how you read:** Model the behavior you want them to engage in by letting kids see you read. Don't save reading books or magazines for only after you've tucked little ones into bed. Talk about what you're enjoying.

**6. Encourage a reading routine:** The world is chaotic right now. Reading can add consistency to a child's life at home. Establish a predictable pattern of when kids can expect to read or be read to each day, whether it's in the morning, afternoon, or before bedtime.

**7. Make reading about discovery:** If your child is aging out of storybooks and bored by fiction, go with non-fiction. Discover sharks, stars, oceans, cars, animals, and other cultures.

**8. Find out more about an author:** Authors now have websites and Instagram presences, social media read-alouds, and interactive follower videos that feature writing prompts, drawing classes, and more. Find your favorite author's shared content to further your child's vision of the world and the creators of the books they love.

**9. Bring reading to life:** Follow a recipe, make a craft or otherwise teach life skills with directions from a book. Older kids can interpret instructions and see what happens or add to them on sticky notes to contribute details that would have been helpful.

**10. Join Kern County Library's Summer Reading Challenge 2020:** Access free materials available online, have books sent to your home without charge, and more. Sign up for this summer's reading program, log your reading, and earn incentives. Registration is already open. Find it all at [www.kerncountylibrary.org/src](http://www.kerncountylibrary.org/src) and see next page for details!



# THE SUMMER READING CHALLENGE



goes virtual

## Learn all Summer Long with Kern County Library: All About this Year's Summer Reading Challenge

**WHAT:** Read more, keep young learners engaged and challenge yourself by participating in this summer's Kern County Library Summer Reading Challenge.

**WHEN:** June through July

**COST:** Free. All Summer Reading Challenge participation and activities are offered without charge.

**AGES:** Open to all ages. Children, parents, grandparents, and all Kern County residents can participate.

**HOW TO SIGN UP:** Register online and track your reading progress through the library's Beanstack platform, including a way for families to create joint accounts. Beanstack offers statistics on reading, rewards readers with digital badges for every book or minute logged, and includes activities that can also earn badges.

Get started at <https://www.kerncountylibrary.org/src/>.

**WHY:** "This year more than ever, summer learning loss is a concern in our community and the library is poised to offer online resources to support learning and entertainment over the summer," said Jasmin LoBasso, marketing and promotions associate II.

**THIS YEAR'S CHALLENGE:** Log 10 books or 10 hours of reading.

**ABOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING AND VIRTUAL RESOURCES:** Kern County Library branches remain closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic at the time this information was prepared. Digital titles are available online and Zip Books, a service that ships titles not currently available through the library directly from Amazon to borrowers' homes, is open to all cardholders.

**STAY INFORMED:** Find your community library's Facebook page to keep up with program announcements.

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**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**

# SUMMER DAY CAMP

**June 1, 2020**  
**7am to 6pm**

**For more information call us at 325-3730**  
**or visit us at [bgclubsofkerncounty.org](http://bgclubsofkerncounty.org)**

# What I WANT When I'm Stuck at Home (Hint: It's Ice Cream) & What I NEED While I'm Stuck at Home (Hint: It's Not Ice Cream)

Every time people complain about being stuck at home, I think, "Well, at least this didn't happen in the 80s." Imagine?

You'd have just been STUCK. I remember thinking back then, "Man, you can order a pizza for delivery. You can have flowers delivered. Why can't you have ice cream delivered?" My entire fantasy in junior high was to have ice cream delivered to my house.

Now you can have groceries, candy, ice cream, or restaurant food delivered. (Unless you live where I live. In which case, anyone except Walmart will deliver to you. I'm too far off the beaten path for Walmart. Yay, me.)

So you are stuck at home, BUT you can have ANYTHING you want, ANYTIME. (Oh, AND you can watch movies WITHOUT COMMERCIALS while you eat your ice cream.)

Only ordering delivery is EVEN BETTER now because now we have the INTERNET, which means that even introverts can get what they want painlessly because you don't have to actually get on the phone and TALK to anyone to place an order.

You don't even have to actually ANSWER the door when the order arrives. Back in the 80's you had to pay the driver cash before you could take your pizza. Now you just look out your peep hole and wait till they leave. Then you open the door, grab the goodies, bring them inside, wipe them down with bleach water, and enjoy! The entire process takes nothing more than internet access and a credit card. I could not have imagined anything more perfect in my 13-year old brain.



So I've learned some things from this whole staying home thing. I'm ready for my "Do Over."

Like, let's go back to March 1. Let me stock up on children's Tylenol and distilled water and 1/8-inch elastic and milk and get my garden going and organize my garage and get my hair cut and go to the dentist and the OB/GYN and the eye doctor and my regular doctor and check out ALL the good books from the library and cancel my gym membership (oh, wait. I did that back in 2017).

Oh, and I would TOTALLY go to all those Zoom trainings they offered at work. In fact, I would start TEACHING on Zoom just to get things going. I don't mean from home; I mean in the classroom. I'd be like, "OK, everyone open up Zoom and log in. Let's do this." And then we'd all just sit in a dark classroom and have class on Zoom. Remote class. In each other's presence. So, by the time they were alone in their houses, my students would be professional Zoomers.

Instead, my family got to see how what happens when you actually run out of things like lettuce and distilled water.

We learned how to make our own distilled water for my husband's C-PAP machine because the stores were all out, and the only place you could buy it was Amazon—for \$87 a gallon.

The Day Without Lettuce turned into One Child's Week of Sitting in the Bathroom with Books. And now we have a garden.

So please. Just let me go back to March 1. I'll get it right this time. I will start a garden. I will buy distilled water. And I promise I won't hoard it or sell it on Amazon for \$87 a gallon.



Summer is on its way & We'll be ready for you.

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 June 8-12, 2020

Session #1  
 9am - 12pm

Session #2  
 2pm - 5pm

**WEEK #2**  
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Session #1  
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~~Session #2~~ (FULL)  
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**PLEASE RECYCLE!**

# ACTIVITY CORNER ANSWERS

p.22

Sudoku:

4	7	3	5	6	9	1	2	8
1	9	2	7	4	8	5	3	6
8	5	6	2	1	3	9	4	7
9	3	8	6	2	1	7	5	4
5	6	7	8	9	4	3	1	2
2	1	4	3	5	7	6	8	9
7	8	5	4	3	6	2	9	1
3	4	1	9	7	2	8	6	5
6	2	9	1	8	5	4	7	3

Crossword:

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| Across      | Down       |
| 1. Friendly | 1. Fathers |
| 5. House    | 2. Ears    |
| 8. Post     | 3. Dad     |
| 9. Stricter | 4. Yachter |
|             | 6. User    |
|             | 7. Epic    |

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## ACTIVITY CORNER

### WORD FIND ANSWERS

p.23

## AUTISM SOCIETY

Improving the Lives of All Affected by Autism  
Kern Autism Network

"Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network provides support, awareness, information and education to families and the public throughout Kern County"

Due to the current influx of circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic, the organization has suspended all activities and events till further notice. Please see our website [www.kernautism.org](http://www.kernautism.org) or our Facebook Page for further current updates. Thank you for your patience and understanding and please keep your families safe.

EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM:

- Delayed language development
- Repetitive language
- Little or no eye contact
- Repetitive mannerisms
- Inflexible routines or rituals
- Preoccupation with object parts
- Little interest in friendships

SERVICES OFFERED:

- Monthly Parent Support Groups
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**Father's Day is June 21.**  
**How do you plan to honor a special Dad in your life? Readers answer:**  
A video celebration message to dad and a virtual lunch together. - Alice Chang  
Thanking and spoiling him for all he has done and sacrificed for me and our five children! - Erica Jimenez  
My dad will be getting a lovely card and phone call, since I can't spend Father's Day with him this year! - Allyssa Kaiser  
Hopefully by then I will be able to go hiking with him, something he loves to do. - Beatriz Olaya

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# June activity corner ...answers on page 19



## Sudoku

		3				1		8
1	9		7	4		5		
8	5		2			9		
	3	8						4
5		7	8	9			1	
2			3	5				
7	8		4			2	9	
		1			2	8		
6	2	9	1		5			

Level: Beginner

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve: the number 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. Figure out the order the numbers will appear by using the clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets!

## Crossword Puzzle

1			2		3		4
	■	■		■		■	
5		6		7	■	■	
	■		■	8			
					■	■	
9							

### ACROSS

- 1. Kind
- 5. Place to live
- 8. Supports something
- 9. More severe

### DOWN

- 1. Dads
- 2. Listening parts
- 3. Male parent
- 4. One who sails in a yacht
- 6. Operator
- 7. Heroic

## Creative Coloring



FLIP-FLOPS ARE WORN ALL SUMMER LONG, ESPECIALLY WHEN WALKING ALONG THE COASTLINE. SIMILAR FOOTWEAR WAS ONCE WORN BY ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.





## Summer Word Find

Find the hidden summer fun in the puzzle. Look up, down, diagonally, and backwards!



B	U	C	R	A	C	E	S	T	G	N	B	B	H	B	E	K	M	M	R
Z	C	B	O	D	S	Y	P	R	W	Y	T	R	A	P	U	I	F	Y	V
I	O	I	D	T	H	E	A	R	A	C	E	T	R	A	C	K	S	E	F
T	N	P	K	F	T	D	A	W	F	I	M	S	S	W	E	G	U	S	E
Z	I	S	A	K	E	O	F	U	D	A	I	U	E	M	B	A	R	E	Z
V	T	T	C	R	V	R	N	S	F	I	I	C	A	E	R	S	F	D	P
L	S	N	I	R	A	I	R	C	R	B	M	R	S	G	A	E	I	I	I
A	I	E	S	S	C	D	P	I	A	E	G	I	I	D	B	C	N	R	E
V	R	M	U	C	S	W	E	P	S	N	L	C	D	T	N	V	G	S	S
I	U	E	M	T	F	D	F	R	I	H	D	K	E	H	F	A	T	W	D
N	O	S	B	H	V	E	B	M	A	R	W	Y	R	I	D	E	B	M	U
R	T	U	B	O	S	W	M	H	A	A	S	H	R	A	K	V	M	D	Y
A	O	M	U	T	A	I	B	N	S	A	Z	E	E	C	P	I	C	N	T
C	F	A	I	G	W	R	I	G	R	E	W	A	I	E	N	S	V	Y	A
K	F	V	I	S	O	R	D	C	O	O	L	T	B	I	L	Y	T	H	A
O	A	S	W	N	A	C	A	W	R	D	T	A	G	L	I	O	T	K	H
L	O	U	S	M	V	D	A	K	A	K	N	O	S	Y	Y	B	N	A	A
F	M	G	A	M	E	S	S	R	D	L	L	R	N	O	I	T	C	U	A
A	B	A	L	L	O	O	N	S	T	F	K	W	O	B	K	E	U	L	K
A	I	B	R	E	M	M	U	S	Y	I	W	Z	P	C	U	E	W	N	Z

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FERRIS

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MINI-GOLF

MUSIC

PARADE

PARTY

PIES

RACES

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- Provide the Kern County Teacher of the Year finalists the opportunity to represent Kern County in the 2021 California Teacher of the Year event.

All nominees must have completed eight or more years of teaching, be employed full time, with teaching as the primary responsibility, and demonstrate leadership and innovation in and outside of the classroom walls that embodies lifelong learning.

*"All three Teachers of the Year pivoted beautifully in this distance learning environment," said Bryant. "They were innovative in their own way and said 'How can I go beyond the curriculum handed to me, because I see that my students need more than the baseline, so I can meet them where they are and take them to that next level.'"*

## Teachers of the Year & 54 Honorees: Amazing Educators Recognized in Kern County and Beyond

By Callie Collins

One teacher can make an amazing difference in the life of a child. The ability to adapt to specific needs is a characteristic Kern County's outstanding teachers share.

The Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office has named three Teachers of the Year and honored 54 educators who stand out among the community's more than 15,000 professionals.

### Outstanding teachers who rose to the pandemic's challenges

"These teachers are truly incredible. Their commitment to service and helping students learn and grow academically as well as emotionally contributed to this year's selection process, which was unique for all involved," said Malaika Bryant, Director, Educator Development & Data Support in reference to the COVID-19 pandemic that unexpectedly cut California's 2019-2020 school year short. "They are thinking about that balance all the time. Everything they do is through that lens. All 54 honorees are very dedicated to their students. They strive to meet children where they are and help them develop to the next level."

Technology has occupied a more important role than usual this school year as a distance learning platform and a solution for continued connectedness despite quarantine restrictions.

"All three Teachers of the Year pivoted beautifully in this distance learning environment," said Bryant. "They were innovative in their own way and said 'How can I go beyond the curriculum handed to me, because I see that my students need more than the baseline, so I can meet them where they are and take them to that next level.'"

### About the honor and its selection process

According to the Office of the Superintendent's website, the program "is designed to highlight educational innovation, student learning and the rewards of teaching. Each district is encouraged to hold its own district-wide selection process and forward nominations to the county office."

#### The Teacher of the Year selection process is to:

- Spotlight local excellence in education.
- Provide each district the opportunity to recognize, honor and celebrate selected individuals

Out of the 54 district honorees, a portion submitted the official documentation required for the competitive application process for Teacher of the Year, including essays, answers to prompts and a resume, in addition to an interview. Two out of the three will go on to represent Kern County at the state level, a number based on population.

"This year, we were very intentional about doing a Zoom interview and asking about how teachers have stepped up in light of the COVID situation and evolved in response to this current distance learning environment because that's something no one had experienced before. We asked what's similar, what's different, what they will continue to do and what they will do differently," said Bryant, who described nominees' answers as "wise" and "creative."

### Honoring Kern County's teachers

Instead of an in-person celebration at the Bakersfield Museum of Art, teachers were featured in a series of videos broadcast on Kern Educational Television Network (KETN), Spectrum Channel 15 and on the district's social media channels.

All 54 honorees received certificates and desktop awards. The three Teachers of the Year received cash prizes and celebratory yard signs as well. At the time of this interview, Bryant was driving to deliver gift bags as well.

Find the full list of honorees on the next page.

## Teachers of the Year: Q&A

Third grade teacher **Wajeha Chaudhry** of Loudon Elementary, seventh grade English teacher **Nicole Negron** of Sierra Middle School and eighth grade History/Social Studies teacher **Joseph Andreotti** are Kern County's Teachers of the Year.

They can now move forward and apply for the same honor at the state level.

Each answered three important questions for us.

### Q. What does this honor mean to you and why?

**Chaudhry:** I am extremely proud to be the first Pakistani Teacher of the Year finalist for Kern County. I also learned at the district board meeting that I am the first teacher from my school district (PBVUSD) to make it as a county finalist. This honor is important to me because it recognizes what many teachers do every single day. It honors teachers who go above and beyond to do what they can for their students. It is a wonderful feeling to be among many amazing teachers. I grew up with the kindest and most loving teachers in my family. My mom and maternal grandparents were professors in Pakistan. I learned so much from them and try to apply that to my daily practice. I feel that this honor belongs to them as much as it does to me. Teaching is a team effort. Many people working together and learning from one another allows us to give our best to our students. I love what I do and many times the profession of teaching is not one that people think of as a dream job, but to me, it is exactly that. I have wanted to teach since I was a young girl and I get to live out my dream every single school day.

**Negron:** It means a lot because it represents all of the hard work that has gone into what I've been doing and also the successes my students have had. This award shines a spotlight on what they've done, the struggles and obstacles they've overcome. The kids I'm working with now often come from backgrounds of poverty and adversity and a lot of them struggle with trusting people, including adults in particular. They may struggle to trust teachers and know we have their welfare and their interests at the forefront. We work for that at Sierra. We want them to be healthy and to be safe. Yes, we're there to learn but also want them to know we want them to be taken care of and this award recognizes that we work for all students' needs. Working with kids in the classroom is where my heart is.

**Andreotti:** Being chosen as the Lakeside Union School District's Teacher of the Year and one of the Kern County Teachers of the Year are both amazing honors. These honors remind me of how lucky I am to be able to teach such inspiring students year after year, and how none of it would be possible without the support of their families, my fellow staff members and administration, my own former teachers, and from my amazing wife.

### Q. What would you like families to know about public education in Kern County?

**Chaudhry:** Public education works and it works even better when we all work together to do what's best for the kids. The teachers in Kern County, and all over the country, work hard to meet the needs of each student.

**Negron:** Regardless of politics and what they hear in the news, teachers aren't in it for the money or to try to get a higher paycheck. We're in it for the kids. We teach them to advocate for themselves and think positively and not to respond to situations with physical violence. We see challeng-

es for families in our district and, in a way, their kids do become our kids. We worry about them, we want to know that they are safe, and we are still trying to keep a line of communication open and pursue distance learning. We are not on a break from learning. This is not a happy time or a relaxing time. We never got to say the proper goodbyes to our students and some of that is especially painful because of graduation and boundary changes. The situation took away those opportunities for closure. Just know that we care about your children.

**Andreotti:** Public education not only provides our students with academic learning in a variety of subjects, it empowers them with the opportunity to meet people from various ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds which helps them become more accepting, understanding, and empathetic of the world around them. They learn how to collaborate with other students that possess diverse abilities in a variety of situations that take place in our classrooms, in our athletic programs, in our theater and music programs, and on our playgrounds. They gain access to teachers and support staff who want nothing more than to see all of them succeed academically and socially.



### Q. If you could offer one tip for learning over the summer, what would that be?

**Chaudhry:** My one tip for learning over the summer is for students to read and work on the summer packets (provided by your school) with an adult, when possible.

**Negron:** My best advice is keep it simple. Don't overwork or overstress. Just have your kids read. Read anything. Read everything. Read what you like at any level. If you wanted to have your kids get better at basketball or baseball or soccer, you'd have them practice. It's the same approach. Just reviewing basic math facts and get faster and faster at those can have an effect because those foundational skills serve them better in higher math.

**Andreotti:** Summer vacation can serve as a great time for our students to develop social skills by participating in activities such as sports programs, attending a summer camp or just by getting the opportunity to spend more time with friends and family. It can also provide additional time to review concepts or improve in an academic area before moving on to the next grade level. I suggest keeping it fun and collaborative. My students love playing Kahoot and Quizlet. A family could read a book together, watch the accompanying Movie, and then create a Kahoot or Quizlet together as a family to test comprehension. Learning and creating something together will

## local education (continued)

encourage discussion and allow for both parents and children to teach and learn from each other.

Today, our students have access to vast amounts of educational tools online. I would also suggest having students explore the Google Music Lab. It is a free online program that teaches students and adults how to create their own music that can be shared with others. It is simple, rewarding, and my students absolutely love it. If your children love video games, then I suggest having them play the Oregon Trail game. We all remember playing this back in the 1980's and early 90's. It still exists, believe it or not, and it is another resource I use in my classroom. The game requires students to read, comprehend, and use math skills.

Ms. Chaudhry has provided commentary in the past with reference to her YouTube channel, Chaudhry's Champions. We asked her one additional question:

**Q. The 2019-2020 school year was an unusual one. Many teachers made use of technology to finish the year but we know you were involved with YouTube long before it became an everyday presence in families' homes as a teaching tool. What do you want families to know about the role of technology in education?**

**Chaudhry:** Technology is a wonderful resource for teachers and students. While I truly believe that there is no substitute for classroom instruction, technology does allow teachers to reach students during this period of distance learning. It is important for families to know that technology assists teachers as they work with their students, but those teacher/student connections are most important. The use of technology does not replace that. Instead, it should be used to enhance those connections as instruction takes place. We are fortunate to have online resources to help us teach during these difficult times.



Kern County Teacher of the Year Joseph Andreotti

## TEACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

**Verna Alejo**, sixth grade, Pond School  
**Joseph Andreotti**, eighth-grade history/social science, Lakeside School  
**Rebecca Baker**, K-6th grade music, Charles H. Castle Elementary  
**Marcy Bilt**, third grade, Highland Elementary  
**Patrice Bird**, seventh-grade history, Freedom Middle  
**Lisa Borrecco**, 9-12th-grade English, Taft Union High  
**Ellen Brockelsby**, seventh-grade English, Jacobsen Middle  
**Darren Buckley**, 9-12th-grade special education, Golden Valley High  
**Deanna Calley**, fifth grade, Wayside Elementary  
**Summer Campbell**, sixth grade, South Fork School  
**Jennifer Castillo**, first grade, Palla Elementary  
**Wajeha Chaudhry**, third grade, Loudon Elementary  
**Jennifer Ciaccio**, English, California City High  
**Donna Cisneros**, third grade, Rosamond Elementary  
**Yolanda "Lonnie" Edgmon**, fourth- through eighth-grade social studies and physical education, Rio Bravo-Greeley School  
**Suzie Ferralli**, geometry, GATE geometry and advanced algebra, Centennial High  
**Bobbie French**, independent studies, West Kern Community  
**Alex Gonzales**, ninth- through 12th-grade English, Cesar E. Chavez High  
**Anthony Gonzales**, K-6th grade physical education, Castle Elementary  
**Carolina Grant**, first grade, James A. Forrest Elementary  
**Kaley Hawkins**, Health Careers Academy (science), Arvin High  
**Cynthia Inman**, Frontier High  
**Stephanie Juve**, kindergarten, Branch Elementary  
**Valaree Kincaid**, teacher/librarian, Ridgeview High  
**Albert Kumpel**, social studies and Criminal Justice Academy coordinator, South High  
**Sonia Martinez**, first grade, Bear Mountain Elementary  
**Victoria Martinez**, AP calculus and math analysis, Highland High  
**Amanda Mehcz**, Kindergarten, Casa Loma Elementary  
**Ines Mendoza**, math, Thompson Junior High  
**Kimberly Minter**, second grade, Mount Vernon Elementary  
**Brent Mixon**, physical education/activities, Kern Valley High  
**Dana Morataya**, sixth grade, Edison Middle  
**Maira Munoz**, Second grade, Planz Elementary  
**Nicole Negron**, seventh-grade English, literacy leadership and video production, Sierra Middle  
**Jenna Odlin**, theater, East Bakersfield High  
**Cara Parker**, special education (math), Bakersfield High  
**Karen Pease**, kindergarten through second-grade special education  
**Maria Pfeifle**, third grade, Virginia Avenue Elementary  
**Carol Polston**, first grade, Kernville Elementary  
**C.J. Pope**, drama, Stockdale High  
**Teresa Rimmer**, sixth grade, Voorhies Elementary  
**Sylvia Rios-Mendoza**, kindergarten, Terrace Elementary  
**Shelly Robinson**, second-grade dual immersion, Lamont Elementary  
**Socorro Robles**, third grade, Horizon Elementary  
**Nicole Rodriguez**, science and AVID, West High  
**Tyrel "Ty" Rose**, 10-12th-grade history and government, Foothill High  
**Dana Ross**, world history, North High  
**Kathy Rowland**, ninth-grade GATE English and English Language AP, Mira Monte High  
**Yesina Sabala**, fourth grade, Semitropic School  
**Lisa Smith**, second grade, Norris Elementary  
**Heidi Sullivan**, first grade, Elk Hills Elementary  
**Dana Thompson**, first- and second-grade combination, Buttonwillow School  
**James Willey**, Spanish and CTE biomedical sciences, Shafter High  
**Bob Williams**, fourth grade, Harvest Elementary