



Greetings!

Happy Fall! This fall has felt like one big bumpy start. Daycare closures, COVID exposures, and more have led to a more uncertain and angst-filled fall than many of us had hoped for – and I know I'm not alone. When a COVID exposure led to my family quarantining and my kids missing the first few weeks of elementary school, our community showed up. Friends and neighbors dropped off food, cards, and crafts to keep the kids busy. As a working parent, I did my best to juggle Zoom calls AND big feelings of disappointment and isolation from our kids. When our usual routines weren't an option, text messages and phone calls were points of connection that meant a lot to all of us.

We're on the other side now. The kids are very happily back in school with friends, and I'm grateful that nobody got sick. Our experience was just a blip compared to folks who have fallen ill and lost loved ones to COVID. And, it has me reflecting (again) on how important it is for each of us to show up for one another and lean into our communities through this time. How we do that looks different, but it makes navigating the ups and downs more pleasant and joyful.

Social connection and community are at the heart of PEPS, and the fact that these are basic needs has only become more apparent over the last 18 months. I'm thrilled that our team has been working on expanding our offerings to connect and support parents at different stages and around unique identities. We offer groups for expectant parents twice a month now. Our new Program for Parents of Adolescents and Teens has six pilot sessions starting in October. We have additional pilot groups for LGBTQIA+ families and Single Parents coming soon. And of course, we're continuing to offer PEPS Newborn, Baby Peppers, and Second Time Around Groups, as well as collaborations to deliver peer support to folks we have not historically served.

So now, PEPS Community, I have a request for you! If you know a parent who could benefit from community and connection at any of these ages or stages, please share this newsletter and our [PEPS Programs](#) page with them. None of us should be navigating this alone. All of our groups are currently meeting virtually, and while groups might look a little different than they did in the past, PEPS is still a place where folks can show up and navigate the highs and lows in community.

Thanks for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana".

Dana Guy
PEPS Executive Director
danag@peps.org

PEPS Updates

PEPS 2020 in Review

Like many organizations, 2020 was a year of adapting to meet the needs of our community at PEPS. Read our annual report to learn about our progress toward the four goals in our Strategic Direction and how we're continuing to center our values of equity, inclusion, authenticity, innovation, and community. [Read more.](#)

Parents of Adolescents and Teens (PAT) Pilot Program - Register Now

PEPS is excited to support families with adolescents and teens in a unique pilot program! We have 6 free, virtual nine-week PAT groups open to families with children ages 10-18 starting in October. Each meeting will be led by a Group Leader with a background in adolescent development and psychology, trained in group facilitation. Groups will cover topics such as adolescent brain development, gender identity development, coping with stress, and more. [Sign me up!](#)

PEPS Job Opportunities

PAT Pilot Program Facilitator (Contract): Do you have strong interpersonal skills, knowledge of adolescent health and development, and experience operating with a racial equity lens? This part-time, fully remote contract role involves facilitating 9-week PAT groups for parents of adolescents ages 10-18 years old. BIPOC applicants strongly encouraged to apply! [Learn more about the role.](#)

Data and Evaluation Specialist: This role oversees, monitors, and evaluates data throughout the organization and makes strategic and programmatic recommendations to ensure the quality of PEPS programming. We are looking for someone who can apply equity frameworks to program evaluation with an understanding of inclusive forms of data collection and analysis. [Learn more about the role.](#)

Will & Estate Planning with Megan Gebhardt

Not sure whether you need an estate plan? Megan Gebhardt, owner of Gebhardt Law Office, P.S., outlines why estate planning is essential for parents.

In her most recent article on our Highs & Lows blog, she covers the basics of who needs an estate plan, what the plan includes, and other steps you can take now to ensure your end of life wishes will be carried out.

[Read more here.](#) *(Estimated reading time: 3 minutes)*

Interested in learning more? Attend our virtual event, 6 Steps to Create Your Will with Megan Gebhardt on October 20th from 7-8:30pm. [Count Me In!](#)

Adapting to the Times: WhatsApp Groups at PEPS

Thanks to an innovative collaboration between [PEPS Network Partners](#) during the pandemic, PEPS has been offering selected affinity programs using WhatsApp, a free messaging app that allows users to share texts, voice messages, videos, and more.

Our WhatsApp groups still incorporate the much-loved aspects of PEPS curriculum like sharing Highs & Lows, Developmental Moments, and topic discussions in an adapted format to help parents connect with other families in a flexible, accessible way. Rather than sitting down for a video call at the same time each week, parents communicate in real-time using texts and voice messaging as well as an occasional video call. WhatsApp groups are led by trained facilitators and continue to center the most important aspect of PEPS — building community.

Resources & Inspiration

Vitamin C Stands for Community

What's the essential ingredient to good health? According to Brie Backus, local parent and Integrative Nutrition Health Coach, it's COMMUNITY. Hear what Brie has to say about self-care, self-love, and bringing people together. [Read more.](#) *(Estimated reading time: 5 minutes)*

Big Decisions at 17

Zoe Barker-Aderem, the PEPS Donor Relations Manager, is a University of Washington alum and was able to graduate debt-free thanks to her parents' foresight to invest in an education savings plan. [Read her story.](#) *(Estimated reading time: 3 minutes)*

Basic Needs Advocacy: Diaper Need Awareness Week

Diaper Need Awareness Week is September 27 – October 3, 2021. Read this recent [blog post](#) from WestSide Baby to learn about why diaper need is an economic justice issue.

2021 was a big year for basic needs advocacy, with the WA Legislature passing a budget that includes [\\$5 million in grants to Washington's diaper banks](#) over the next two years. This investment will help provide approximately 29 million diapers to families experiencing diaper need.

However, there's still more work to be done! Diaper need disproportionately impacts families of color. Organizations like WestSide Baby continue to advocate for policies like a monthly "diaper stipend" that will help families access basic needs.

Support those experiencing diaper need by spreading the word on social media using #EndDiaperNeed, donating supplies or funds to a local diaper bank, or engaging in advocacy to improve access to basic needs like diapers.

Buyer Beware: Choosing Safe Children's Resale Products

Used children's goods like toys, clothing, and gear can be potentially hazardous if the goods are not carefully evaluated for safety. Wendy Powell, the owner of Childish Things children's resale store, outlines potential safety hazards with used children's goods and how to safely buy or trade used products. [Read more.](#) *(Estimated reading time: 5 minutes)*

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Program for Early Parent Support
4649 Sunnyside Avenue North, # 324, Seattle, WA 98103-6900