



We had an incredible time at the PEPS Benefit Luncheon on May 7 with 550+ PEPS fans raising money to support our work in the year ahead. What made this one extra special was having my kids Violet (13) and Owen (10) in the audience, to cheer me on and see me in action (complete with a post-speech hug from Owen and a sweet note from Violet, which you can [read on LinkedIn](#)).

Our theme this year was *we are meant to parent in community*. This felt like a full circle moment, considering it was Violet's birth (which was traumatic and complicated, a story for another day) and the healing power of social connection that brought me to PEPS in the first place.

We expressed gratitude to our incredible Group Leaders, talked about the critical need that PEPS is filling in the midst of a loneliness epidemic, and shared about the work PEPS staff do behind the scenes to make it easy for parents to connect.

There's a name for people who are especially good at creating connection. They're the first to invite you to lunch, ask an open-ended question, send a text to check in or motivate a group to get together. Dr. Marisa Franco calls them igniters.

PEPS staff, Group Leaders and our partners are definitely igniters.

And if you're reading this newsletter and staying engaged with PEPS, you must be an ignitor too. So THANK YOU for being a ray of sunshine in the epidemic of loneliness. Read on for opportunities to engage with PEPS and connect and support parents alongside us.

With gratitude,

Dana Guy
PEPS Executive Director

PEPS Updates

It Takes the Whole Community to Build Community – Thanks for Supporting PEPS!

Thank you to all of our community members who joined us at GATHER: The PEPS Benefit Luncheon earlier this month! Together we exceeded our fundraising goal, raising more than \$192,000 along with \$100,000 in matching funds from our Giving Challenge Donors!

Check out these tidbits from the event:

- [Watch our keynote speaker Kat Velloso](#) speak about cultivating meaningful friendships.
- [Watch PEPS Executive Director Dana Guy's speech](#) discussing the loneliness epidemic and how we make the PEPS "magic" happen.

If you missed the event and want to hear more about what PEPS is up to, what we're thinking about and planning, what keeps us up at night, and what inspires us, join us at a virtual [PEPS Lunch and Learn](#) on Thursday, June 13, from 12-1pm.

P.S. If you couldn't make it, it's not too late to [give to PEPS](#) to help us continue supporting parents and building community. Your support — through donating, [volunteering as a Group Leader](#), or simply spreading the word about PEPS to people in your life — truly means the world to us.

Partner Spotlight: Sistema Escolar USA

Mental health, schoolwork, sexuality, substances — parenting an adolescent can be overwhelming. Now, imagine navigating these challenges in an unfamiliar culture without access to support and resources in your native language. PEPS partners with Sistema Escolar USA to offer Parents of Adolescents and Teens (PAT) Groups for Spanish-speaking parents. Read about how we've collaborated to support families in a meaningful, culturally relevant way [on our blog](#).

Stay Involved With PEPS: Upcoming Events

Gathering Interest: PEPS Advisors & Ambassadors Network

Thursday, May 30 | 12-1pm
Virtual (Zoom)

Curious about exploring ways you can further the reach and depth of PEPS? Join us Thursday, May 30th from 12-1pm for [Gathering Interest: PEPS Advisors & Ambassadors Network](#) on Zoom.

Anyone is invited - no matter your previous level of involvement with PEPS! The [Advisors & Ambassadors Network](#) is an intentional way of bringing more voices and expertise to PEPS. Join us to explore how you can contribute to this growing network!

Peer Dynamics Unraveled: Understanding Your Adolescent's Social World

Thursday, May 30 | 6-8pm
Virtual (Zoom)

Want to help your tween feel more self-assured in navigating complex social dynamics, resisting unsafe peer pressure, dealing with bullying, forging meaningful friendships, and expressing their identities in a healthy way as they grow into adulthood?

Join us for a [free, interactive presentation](#) for parents and caregivers of adolescents ages 10-14.

PEPS Group Leader Info Session

Monday, June 3 | 12-1pm
Virtual (Zoom)

Group Leaders are an essential element of PEPS, creating a welcoming space for parents to share, connect, and support one another. Group Leaders give their time and gain community, connections, and skills along the way with in-depth training and support from PEPS. Join us for an info session to learn more and ask questions about volunteering as a PEPS Group Leader.

LGBTQIA+ Family Picnic

Sunday, June 23 | 3-5pm
Woodland Park

Calling all LGBTQIA+ PEPS families! Join us for a [family picnic](#) at Woodland Park to meet neighbors, catch up with your group members, introduce your children, and build a stronger community with parents who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The picnic is open to past participants of our LGBTQIA+ Affinity Groups, as well as LGBTQIA+ families who have participated in PEPS Groups. Light refreshments and snacks will be provided. We hope to see you there!

Local Partners and Sponsors

Tools and Tips to Help Families Reduce Barriers to Postsecondary Education

With costs going up and student debt getting out of control, many families are wondering whether higher education is truly attainable. While the obstacles might seem insurmountable, there are many ways for families to bring the cost of higher education down through savings accounts, financial aid, and other programs. Read [tools and tips for reducing the barriers to postsecondary education](#) from PEPS sponsor WA529 on our blog.

Love Your Gut

Understanding the Microbiome and Fermented Foods

Tuesday, June 4 | 4-7pm

Our gut is often called our second brain. Gut health is extremely important for parents, children, and all of us! Join the Gates Foundation on June 4 from 4-7pm at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Discovery Center to learn how the gut microbiome impacts our health, the benefits of fermented foods, and the Gates Foundation's initiatives supporting gut health and fermented foods. You'll hear from experts in the field of gut health and even get to enjoy a tasting of various gut-healthy bites and sips. [Learn more and RSVP for free.](#)

Calm and Connected: Coaching Coping Skills in Your Children

Wednesday, June 5 | 1pm

Kids are struggling as mental health issues surge. Join ParentMap's free ParentEd Talk on June 5 with mental health counselor Janine Halloran and learn strategies to help your child manage anxiety and build emotional resilience. [Register now.](#)

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