



HomeschoolNYC Newsletter

Celebrating Child-led Learning

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Feb/Mar, 2015

This has been a long winter! Time to read a good book, play lots of games, and have fun in the snow. This is also the perfect time to plan for summer travels, camps, and warm weather activities. Browse through brochures, draw up a budget, explore maps, and use educational skills to create a family adventure. As a child I remember the planning process for a road trip as a series of self-directed lessons in letter writing, reading, mapping, social studies, art, geography, budgeting, scheduling, and more. When travel season finally comes, use your plans as a guide, remaining open to change. It is often through improvisation that we have the best experience!



Laurie Block Spiegel

Improvisation in Homeschooling

Improvisation in Jazz and Homeschooling

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Life Without Instructions Conference

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Send your comments to Laurie@HomeschoolNYC.com.

Improvisation in Jazz and Homeschooling



I have had a lifelong love affair with jazz. Before we had kids, whenever we had a little spare time and money, my husband and I would peruse the jazz clubs of the West Village, starting at one and ending up at another the same night. We were intoxicated with African drumming, Brazilian percussion, moody trumpet wails, New Orleans rhythms, lyrical guitars, and voices that reinvented every instrument. We spent our savings on tickets to hear greats like Miles Davis and Ella Fitzgerald, and we saw Bobby McFerrin in an unforgettable debut performance.

Then came children and homeschooling, and ... [READ MORE...](#)

Winter is Summer Planning Season

Winter is the perfect season to plan for warmer weather. Now is the time to consider summer camps and vacations. Visit tourist bureaus of countries that entice you, and write to Chambers of Commerce and visitor bureaus in states across the USA. They will give you free maps and brochures to help you plan your trip, and you can use these materials for mapping, geography, reading, history, social studies, even math when calculating distances and costs.



For more tips on how to get the biggest learning experience from your trip, read [TIPS for TRAVELING with KIDS.](#)

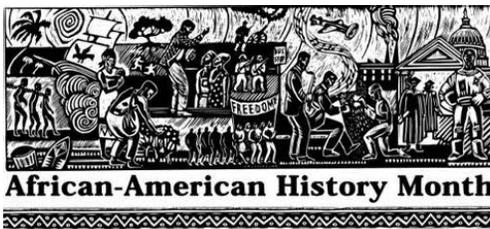


SUMMER CAMPS:
[Camps for Homeschoolers and Family Camps](#)
[Student Exchange and Travel](#)

ROAD TRIPS:
[Corning, NY: Glass and more](#)
[Cobleskill, NY: Indians and Caves](#)
[Mystic, CT: Boats and Belugas](#)

February is Black History month, yet we should be learning Black History all year long!

Field Trips that Celebrate Black History



NYC is full of [historic sites that are a tribute to Black History](#).

[Romare Bearden Exhibit at Columbia University, through March 14](#)

[Photographs from the Schomburg Collection NYPL: Black Life Matters](#)

[Make a Collage Inspired by Romare Bearden](#)



collage detail, student work

Here is a description of a [workshop I gave on Romare Bearden](#). We listened to jazz, examined his artwork, and made collages. Scroll down for photos of [student work](#), and links to [Bearden art activities](#) at the Metropolitan Museum and more. Making a collage is the perfect indoor activity, and a great way to recycle magazines, newspapers, travel brochures, maps, old Christmas cards, food labels... you are limited only by your imagination.

[Quote by Louis Armstrong](#)

"What we play is life."

~ Louis Armstrong (1901-1971), pioneer in American jazz

[AERO 2015 Conference](#)



Don't miss the annual [AERO Conference](#) that empowers alternative educators from all around the world. This year it will be just before Memorial Day, May 20-24, at LIU CW Post Campus, in Brookville, NY, near NYC. Keynote speakers include Sugata Mitra, famous for his TED talk "Build a School in the Cloud" and his "Hole in the Wall" experiment. I am also impressed with Mitra's definitions of the grandmother paradigm and Child Driven Education. I will be presenting a workshop on student-led techniques in the classroom setting, how to get kids to ask their own questions and guide them to self-discovery as part of their process.

New Conference for Homeschoolers and Self-Directed Learners!

[Life Without Instructions Conference](#)

Join me for the first annual [Life Without Instructions Conference](#), Oct 5 - 8 in East Rutherford, NJ (six miles from Manhattan). Featured speakers include Peter Gray

(*Freedom to Learn*). I will be speaking on the unschooler's path to college.



Education Uncensored

Here's what people are saying about Laurie's book:

"You made me laugh, you made me cry, and you inspired me. I can literally hear your voice, and love your storytelling and your wisdom and just the whole package. I'm stimulated and filled with ideas for my own teaching."

~ Dr. Bonnie Shulman, professor of mathematics, Bates College

"I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciated meeting you and reading your book. It is terrific, and for me, the best part was its New York perspective. I know no other book available to homeschoolers that so overtly references an urban perspective."

~ David Albert, author of *And the Skylark Sings with Me* and other books

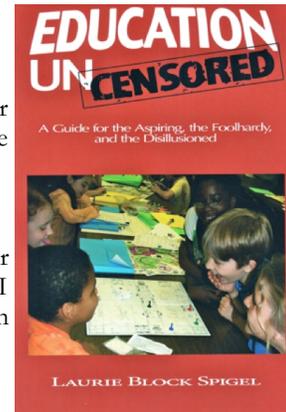
"Laurie's evolution as a teacher and life-long involvement in the world of education has given her a profound understanding of the problems that plague today's schools. This book offers an insightful look at how an increasingly standardized system is robbing our children of their individuality and passion for learning. Additionally, it provides innovative how-to curriculums for anyone involved or interested in educating children."

~ Ellen Labiner, homeschooling parent and special educator

[Read excerpts here.](#)

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Price: \$12.95 plus shipping & handling



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Send us your comments and suggestions! E-mail Laurie@HomeschoolNYC.com.