

A Year's Worth of Fun

Your
Indispensable
ROCKLAND
Fun Guide!

Our top 20 family must-do's for every season—consider it your annual bucket list, and refer to it often! *By Kaitlin Ahern*



Beyond the Page

Download an interactive version of this feature at: nymetroparents.com/seasonal-fun

Explore our catalog of outings—venues within approximately an hour's drive or train ride—at: nymetroparents.com/outings

Find great family day trip options at: nymetroparents.com/daytrips

Scroll through our most popular where-to guides—including everything from carousels to nature centers, berry picking to mini-golf—at: nymetroparents.com/where-to

Browse or search our calendar of events, updated daily, for something to do any day of the year at: nymetroparents.com/calendar

Subscribe to our popular weekend activities newsletter at: nymetroparents.com/register

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SUMMER

FALL

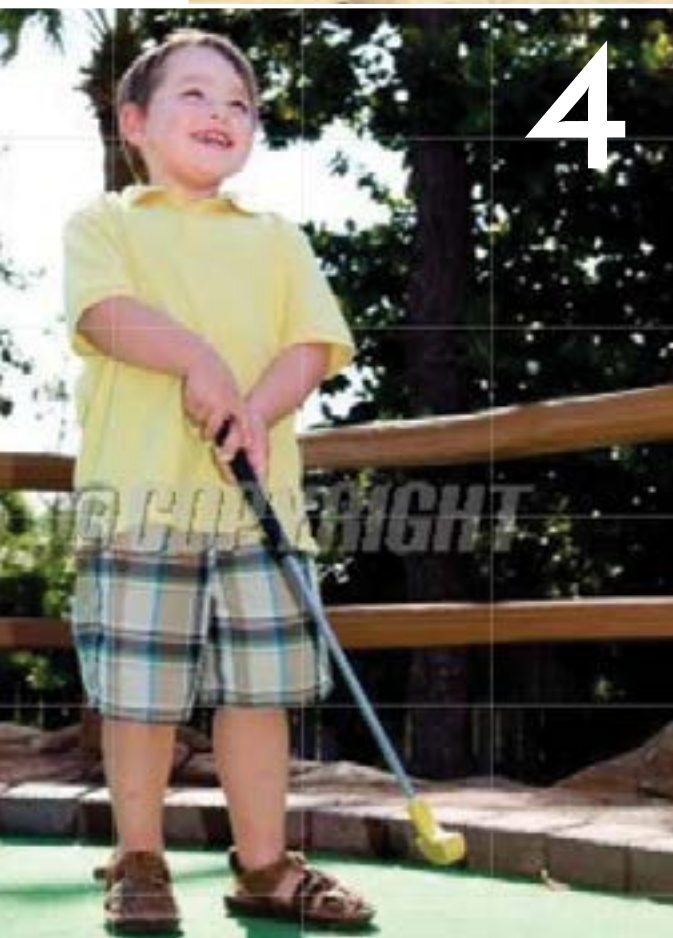
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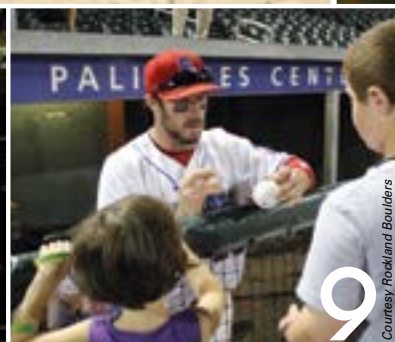
Top 20 Things to Do in Summer



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1. Sweet Summer

Gather your brood and pick your own berries at Ochs Orchard in Warwick (in nearby Orange County) or another berry farm in the area. Find the full list at nymetroparents.com/berries.

2. Strawberry Celebration

The popular annual **Strawberry Festival** kicks off opening day at the Ramsey Farmers' Market in Ramsey, NJ, in early June. Shop for fresh, local produce as well as artisan breads and cheeses, gluten-free baked products, homemade pastas, local honey, and more. Also enjoy music, children's crafts, and a complimentary strawberry treat. Check ramseyfarmersmarket.org for details.

3. Round and Round

Take a ride on the **carousel in Bear Mountain State Park** (located on the southwest side of the baseball field), where kids can hop on the backs of some local animals or ride in the accessible chariot. Find another merry-go-round near you at nymetroparents.com/carousels-suburbs.

4. Fore!

Play the 18-hole **miniature golf** course at Tappan Golf Center (116 Route 303, Tappan), which also boasts a driving range and batting cages. Or test your putting skills at another course in the area (see our guide at nymetroparents.com/minigolf).

5. Casting Your Line

See if the fish are biting at **Piermont Pier and Marsh** on the Hudson River. Boats, canoes, and kayaks can be rented if you prefer to laze along the river while you wait for a tug on your line. Find other fishing spots nearby at nymetroparents.com/fishing.

6. Big Fat Greek Weekend

The annual **Greek Festival** at Saints Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in West Nyack, held in early June, features Greek food, music, dancing, crafts, amusements for children, and wine and beer for parents—pretty much everything except the sun, sand, and scenery of the Greek isles. Find more cultural fairs in our area at nymetroparents.com/festivals.

7. Spirit Street

Nyack's Famous Street Fair in mid-July (also held in the spring and fall) features nearly 300 exhibitors from five states displaying a large selection of handmade crafts, art and photography, retail items, collectibles, and festival foods, all at Main Street and Broadway in Downtown Nyack.

8. Old-Fashioned Fourth

An **Independence Day celebration** at Fort Montgomery State Historic Site in nearby Orange County (nymetroparents.com/ft-montgomery) around the first weekend of July includes costumed interpreters and demonstrations, artillery and musket firings, and period music.

9. Peanuts and Cracker Jacks

Cheer on the **Rockland Boulders**, our county's resident minor league baseball team, at one of the teams home games in Pomona's Provident Bank Park. Kids can often hit the field and run the bases after the last inning, and many games are followed by fireworks. Find more minor league teams in the area at nymetroparents.com/bball.

10. Music in the Great Outdoors

Enjoy a weekly **outdoor concert** at Bowline Point Park in Haverstraw, or find another free summer music series at nymetroparents.com/rock-summer-concerts.

11. Movies Al Fresco

Catch a flick at the **Warwick Drive-In** (warwick-drivein.com), a park-like theater set on 11 acres of farmland that screens first-run movies on multiple screens and has homemade food for sale.

12. To Be or Not to Be?

Introduce the kids to The Bard's timeless work during the **Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival**, a summer-long event that allows you to watch Shakespearean tales unfold as you picnic and lounge on the lawn of Garrison's Boscobel House and Gardens in nearby Putnam County (find more info at nymetroparents.com/boscobel).

13. Beach Bums

Visit one of the three beaches in Harriman State Park in Bear Mountain, where you'll also find camping areas, 200 miles of hiking trails, and 31 lakes and reservoirs. Our full list of beaches in the area is available at nymetroparents.com/beaches.

14. A Homerun

Head to Provident Bank Park in Pomona in mid-June to participate in the annual **Boulder Dash 5K Run/Walk and Children's Fun Run**, a fundraising event hosted by the Rockland Boulders baseball team for a local cause. Registration typically includes a ticket to a Boulders home game later that day. Head to rocklandboulders.com for more info and to register.

15. Beacon of Beauty

Take a guided tour of the historic **Stony Point Lighthouse**, the oldest surviving lighthouse on the Hudson River, on the first or third Saturday of the month. You can also stop by the site (the site of the Revolutionary War's Battle of Stony Point, that is) for living history demonstrations, old-fashioned artillery drills, and battlefield tours held throughout the summer. Head to nymetroparents.com/historical-places for more historic sites in the NYC area.

16. Painted Ladies

See and feed live butterflies during **Butterfly Weekend** at the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum in Cornwall (Orange County) in late June. And get up-close with lots of different animals at zoos and nature centers throughout the area (nymetroparents.com/zoos).

17. Let's Pow-Wow

Check out a real tepee, play with Native American instruments, try some foods popular in American Indian cultures, and take in an incredible dance performance by Native American groups from throughout the Americas at the **Native American Heritage Celebration of the Hudson Valley** in Stony Point in early August.

18. Huzzah!

The **New York Renaissance Faire** in Tuxedo Park's Sterling Forest (Orange County) kicks off in early August and runs through late September. Bring the kids for circus-type performances by costumed characters, a jousting match starring knights in shining armor, and lots of carnival-inspired games, all in a 16th-century setting. Find our list of top family day trips in the NYC area at nymetroparents.com/day-trips.

19. Horsing Around

Take a **horseback riding** lesson at Nickel-O Farms in West Nyack or one of the other horse stables in Rockland (nymetroparents.com/horseback-riding), most of which also offer summer camp programs and birthday party packages.

20. The Fairest of Them All

Head to the area's nearest county fair, the **Dutchess County Fair** in Rhinebeck (Dutchess County), in mid- to late August to see farm animals and pig races, watch a variety of performances, shop for crafts, ride and play the amusements, and enjoy a mind-boggling selection of food. Plus, download our mega guide to summer fun at nymetroparents.com/125.

Top 20 Things to Do in Fall

Search Rockland family activities at: nymetroparents.com/calendar

1. Apples Abound

Pick your own apples throughout September at Orchards of Concklin in Pomona. Find more u-pick apple orchards and farms in our full guide at nymetroparents.com/apples.

2. Sign of the Season

Once you've plucked those plump fruits, bring them to Tenafly Nature Center in nearby Bergen County, NJ, to make fresh apple cider on weekend dates in September and October.

3. Germany Comes to Rockland

On weekends in September and October, Bear Mountain State Park hosts its **Oktoberfest** fall festival featuring authentic German music, food, beer, and vendors. While you're there, take a stroll around Hessian Lake and enjoy the park's fall foliage.

4. Piles of Fun

Take in the fall foliage at the **Hudson River Valley Ramble** hike at Stony Point Lighthouse and Battlefield in late September, where costumed guides will also discuss the history of the site. For more places to view the season's colorful leaves, go to nymetroparents.com/leaf.

5. Exploring the JCC

Families are invited to the **Community Fall Festival at the JCC Rockland** in West Nyack in late September. Kids can enjoy fun activities while parents check out what the community center has to offer. The day also includes programs on nutrition, heart health, and healthy living. Search for more open houses in the area at nymetroparents.com/calendar.

6. Hungry Hollow Harvest Hoedown

Hungry Hollow Co-op hosts the annual **Farmers' Festival** in late September, celebrating local agriculture with live music, locally sourced food and refreshments, children's activities, and more at its location in Chestnut Ridge. Check out a host of other fall-themed festivals in the area at nymetroparents.com/rockland-fall-fairs.

7. Ciao, Bella!

At the annual **Italian Festival** (congersitalianfestival.com) at Congers Station Park, held either in late September or early October, you'll celebrate Italian culture with live entertainment, food and desserts from local restaurants, themed crafts, and specialty vendors.

8. Fall's Favorite Fruit

On weekends in October, take a hayride to the fields and pick your own pumpkins at Dr. Davies Farm in Congers or another pumpkin farm in the area (see the full list at nymetroparents.com/pumpkins).

9. Pumpkins Galore

Don't miss **The Great Jack O' Lantern Blaze**, an outdoor walkthrough experience featuring thousands of hand-carved pumpkins, at Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson (Westchester County). The Blaze opens in early October and runs through mid-November. Get details at nymetroparents.com/vc-manor.

10. Plenty of Fun in Pearl River

In early October, head to the **Pearl River Day Festival** and enjoy food, music, and entertainment as you browse the town's shops, restaurants, and other local businesses. For kids, there's usually face painting, pumpkin painting, balloon twisting, bouncy attractions, and more. Check pearlriverny.org for details.

11. Family Bon(d)fire

Toast some marshmallows, tell some stories, and get cozy in mid-October during a **Family Bonfire Night** at Boscobel House and Gardens in Garrison (nymetroparents.com/boscobel), in nearby Putnam County.

12. Why to Walk Now

Join the **Greater Hudson Valley Walk Now for Autism** at Rockland County Community College in mid-October. Find more causes to get walking for at nymetroparents.com/walks.

13. Some Like It Hot

The newly established **Smoke-N-Fire Food Fest** (nyfoodfest.com) at Provident Bank Park in Pomona lets you sample specialty foods from hot sauce and spice companies as well as food from area restaurants and produce from local farms. Last year, the fest was held in mid-October and included a Rockland County culinary competition, live music, children's entertainment, a fire juggler, and a spicy food-eating contest.

14. The Power of Pink

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October), Nyack Hospital hosts **Blow Away Breast Cancer**, which includes a 5K walk/run and a host of other activities that help raise money and awareness for this important cause. Go to nyackhospital.org for more info and to register.

15. Nyack Loves Apples

In mid- to late October, Friends of the Nyacks hosts its annual **Apple Fest** at Nyack's Memorial Park (on the shore of the Hudson River) where you can enter an apple pie-baking contest, make apple-y crafts, and enjoy kid-friendly music and entertainment. Check for updates at friendsofthenyacks.org.



Deborah Greenmark



Courtesy Macy's

16. Spooky Season Staple

Dancing ghouls, marching bands, floats, stilt-walkers, and giant puppets are all part of the very popular **Nyack Halloween Parade**, held in late October (check nyackchamber.org for the exact date). Prizes are awarded for best costumes and best floats, and the parade is typically followed by a monster mash-style party at Nyack Center.

Rock School (bluerockschool.org). Expect folk dancing, traditional fiddle tunes, and refreshments. Event proceeds benefit one of the school's scholarship funds.

19. Wordsmiths Unite

Veteran storytellers do what they do best at the annual **Rockland County Storytelling Festival** in early to mid-November, which also includes student storytellers and story crafts for kids. The event is held at Haverstraw King's Daughters Public Library in Garnerville (hkdpil.org).

17. Halloween at the Zoo

New Jersey's Bergen County Zoo opens its doors for trick-or-treaters and special nighttime visits with the animals during its **Zoo Boo** festival in late October. Don't miss a ride on the Erie Express haunted train! Get details on tons of other Halloween events in the area at nymetroparents.com/halloween.

20. Turkey, Pomp, and Circumstance

It's worth the trip into the city—at least once—to experience the magic of the **Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade**, which has become as much a part of Turkey Day celebrations as family feasts, post-consumption naps, and football. For details on this year's parade, visit macys.com/parade.

18. Foot-Stompin' Fun

The old-fashioned **Family Barn Dance with Live Fiddle Music**, held at Congers Lake Memorial Park Auditorium in early November, is hosted by West Nyack's Blue



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Courtesy Tenafly Nature Center



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Dawn Roode

Tom Nycz

Top 20 Things to Do in Winter

Search Rockland family activities at: nymetroparents.com/calendar

1. Moon Mission

Join a **Public Space Mission** at the Town of Ramapo Challenger Center (nymetroparents.com/lhvcc) on the third Sunday of every month, when kids can go on simulated, interactive missions to Mars, the moon, and a comet.

2. Slip 'n Glide

Hit the ice for some classic winter fun at **Bear Mountain State Park Ice Rink**. The rink is typically open early November through mid-March (weather-permitting). Find more indoor and outdoor ice rinks in the area at nymetroparents.com/ice-skating.

3. Nothing Like the Real Thing

Make this Christmas special with an early December trip to **cut your own Christmas tree** at Emmerich Tree Farm in Warwick (Dutchess County), where you can also enjoy wagon rides to fields, hot chocolate, and cookies by the bonfire. Search for more tree farms in the area at nymetroparents.com/xmastrees.

4. Magical Menorah

At the **Family Hanukkah Event** at JCC Rockland in West Nyack, families get to help build a giant Hanukkah menorah out of Legos. The time frame for this event depends on when Hanukkah falls—check nymetroparents.com/calendar for updates and local menorah lightings.

5. Jolly Old St. Nick

The Historical Society of Rockland County (rocklandhistory.org) opens the doors to the 1832 Jacob Blauvelt House in New City to welcome children of all ages to celebrate **St. Nicholas Day**. Each child receives a special treat in his or her shoe from St. Nicholas, and everyone can visit with St. Nicholas and his horse, enjoy refreshments, and visit the society's current exhibition.

6. Visions of Sugar Plums

Rockland Youth Dance Ensemble presents that classic Christmas tale, **The Nutcracker** ballet, at SUNY Rockland Community College in early to mid-December. If you plan to head into the city for a Christmas show, too, check out our top picks at nymetroparents.com/nyc-holiday-shows.

7. Christmas Present, Christmas Past

TheatreworksUSA presents a family-friendly version of Charles Dickens' **A Christmas Carol** at Bergen Performing Arts Center in Englewood, NJ, usually a few days before Christmas. The show typically stops by for only one performance, so be sure to buy tickets early (theatreworksusa.org).

8. Mountains of Fun

Grab your gear and pack up the kids for a day of skiing or snowboarding at one of the area's family-friendly resorts. For details, visit nymetroparents.com/ski.



9. It's All Downhill from Here

When the flakes start to fly, pull out your Flexible Flyer and get set for some snowday fun. But before you head out to your local **slidding** hill, it's wise to check out our sledding safety tips at nymetroparents.com/sled-safe.

10. Seeing Green

The Bossy Frog Band's Holiday Show features everyone's favorite frog in a seasonal, non-denominational, end-of-December celebration full of music and dancing. The show has been held at the Lafayette Theatre in Suffern and the Nyack Center; check nymetroparents.com/calendar for location details closer to the show. Before you go, see tips from Bossy Frog's Rockland-based bandleader Jeffrey Friedberg (who is also a certified music therapist) on how to make the most of your child's concert experience at nymetroparents.com/live-music.

11. 3...2...1...

Kick off the New Year at Bear Mountain State Park. The ice rink, carousel, and zoo area are open all day on Jan. 1. For more winter activities in the Rockland area, go to nymetroparents.com/rock-winter.

12. Skating Sensation

The **Disney on Ice** tour typically stops at the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, NJ, for a few days in early January. Check disneyonice.com for the full schedule.

13. Give a Little, Get a Lot

Give back to the community on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in mid-January. Learn more about **volunteer opportunities** in the Rockland area at nymetroparents.com/volunteer.

14. If You Build It...

Escape from the cold and head to **LEGOLAND Discovery Center Westchester** in nearby Yonkers. Among its attractions,



LEGOLAND boasts several themed building stations, rides, and MINILAND, a miniature re-creation of the New York metro landscape. Learn more about it at nymetroparents.com/legoland.

15. Family Flicks

What's better on a cold winter weekend than some warm popcorn and a family movie? Head to the Palisades Center Mall in West Nyack to catch the latest films in **IMAX**. Or if you have a family member with sensory issues, opt for a sensory-friendly matinee where the lights stay up, the sound is turned down, and audience members are encouraged to get up and make as much noise as they please—find more info at nymetroparents.com/movies.

16. Bounce!

Keep the kids active in the cold months at **Bounce! Trampoline Sports** (nymetroparents.com/bounce), an indoor play space at 612 Corporate Way in Valley Cottage that has tons of fun trampolines and foam pits.

17. Talking Camp

Look ahead and start planning the perfect summer for your child at the indispensable **Westchester Camp & Summer Activities Fair** at Crowne Plaza in nearby White Plains, typically held in early February. Meet directors, learn about a wide variety of programs, and even win a prize or two. For more information, visit westchestercampfair.com.

18. Calling All Princesses

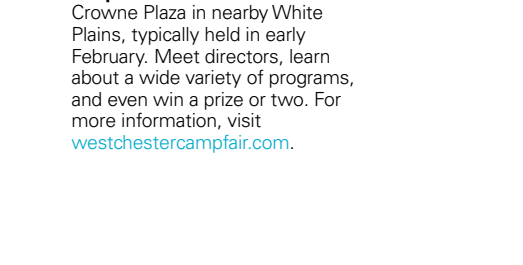
Bring your little sweetheart to the **Princess Ball** at New Jersey Children's Museum, located at 599 Valley Health Plaza in Paramus, NJ (njcm.com). This pre-Valentine's Day celebration offers kids the chance to meet Cinderella, Snow White, Ariel, and several other Disney princesses while enjoying dinner and dancing.

19. A Slam Dunk

Catch the famous **Harlem Globetrotters** (harlemglobetrotters.com) in mid-February, when these world-class ball-handlers show off their skills on the basketball court at the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, NJ.

20. Sweet Spots

Do you love syrup on your pancakes? See where the sweet stuff comes from during a **maple sugaring** event at The Nature Place Day Camp in Chestnut Ridge. You'll learn how to tap a tree and boil down sap into syrup. Find more details, plus other locations that host maple sugaring events in February and early March, at nymetroparents.com/maple-sugaring.



Top 20 Things to Do in Spring

1. Seuss-Style Celebrations

March 2 is Dr. Seuss's birthday and **National Read Across America Day**. Head to your local library or Barnes & Noble store for special story times and more activities that celebrate the joys of reading.

2. Erin Go Bragh!

In honor of St. Patrick's Day, Pearl River hosts a super celebration of all things Irish, including the second-largest **St. Patrick's Day parade** in the state outside New York City. It typically features more than 20 bagpipe bands, at least three high school marching bands, veterans, fire fighters, police officers, and performances by at least six Irish dance schools. Check for details on the parade in early March at nymetroparents.com/calendar.

3. All-in-One Expo

For more than 15 years, families have flocked to **Youthfest** at the SUNY Rockland Community College Fieldhouse in Suffern to meet and learn about local businesses, services, and activities for kids and parents. This popular annual March event also features loads of giveaways, activities, and performances throughout the day. It's sponsored by the Rockland County Youth Bureau, so check rocklandgov.com/departments/youth-bureau for details.



James P. McDonnell



Courtesy Feld Entertainment

4. Under the Big Top

See amazing acrobats, awesome animals, clever clowns, and much more when the **Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus** (ringling.com) stops by the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, NJ, in mid- to late March.

5. Kumbaya 'Round the Campfire

Gather around a **Spring Campfire** at the Tenafly Nature Center in Tenafly, NJ, in late March to learn how this season affects our local plants and animals. You'll also listen to stories and roast

marshmallows for s'mores. If you plan on making your own campfire at home, go to nymetroparents.com/campfire for 10 tips on cooking food over the flames.

6. The Magic of Disney

Experience the magic of **Disney Live!** at the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, NJ, where you can catch some of your favorite characters performing in early April. For more information, visit disneylive.com.

7. Tots on the Trails

Beginning in April, parents can bring their babies, toddlers, and young children to the Hudson Highlands Nature Museum (hhnaturemuseum.org) in Cornwall for its **Nature Strollers** program, which opens up the museum's family-friendly trails to this special group every Thursday morning through November.

8. Shopping Local

In early April, the **Nyack Farmers' Market** moves from its indoor location in the Nyack Center to the Main Street parking lot in downtown Nyack. Open Thursdays (8am-2pm) through late November, the outdoor market offers local produce, cheese, wine, bakery and specialty items, and more. Get details on live entertainment at the market at nymetroparents.com/calendar.

9. In Search of Sweet Treasures

Near Easter time, kids ages 10 and younger can join **Boulder Bird's Egg Hunt** at Provident Bank Park in Pomona, home of the Rockland Boulders. Special prizes are hidden along with the thousands of candy-filled eggs, and kids can take pictures with Boulder Bird and the Bunny throughout the day. For more Easter activities in the area, visit nymetroparents.com/easter.

10. Service with a Smile

In honor of Earth Day, Keep Rockland Beautiful hosts **community cleanup events** throughout the county to, well, keep Rockland beautiful! Find details on this and other community service activities at nymetroparents.com/volunteer.

11. Spring Snips

The popular **Sheep Shearing** event at Bergen County Zoo in Paramus, NJ, invites visitors to cheer on the zoo's flock of sheep as they get their annual haircuts in early May. In addition to shearing demos, there are children's crafts, special story times, wool spinning demonstrations, and more, and you can enjoy visiting the animals and taking a spin on the zoo's carousel while you're there. Find more zoos, botanical gardens, and nature centers in the area at nymetroparents.com/zoos.

12. The Great March

Join the March of Dimes' **March for Babies** at Blue Hill Plaza in Pearl River in early May and support research to understand and prevent health problems in infants. For details on this and other charity walks in the area, go to nymetroparents.com/walks.

Receive 125 creative reasons to get outside at: nymetroparents.com/register



Yasmeen Anderson



16. Time to Play

Rye's Playland, in nearby Westchester County, opens for the season in mid-May with rides and games for all ages. Browse the full list of area theme parks at nymetroparents.com/amusementparks.

17. Heart Land

Cropsey Community Farm in New City hosts open houses and other family events throughout the spring and summer. Visitors to this 12-acre organic, biodynamic community farm—the first of its kind in Rockland County—can typically stroll the fields, meet the farm team, and do a planting activity or even work alongside the team in the fields. Check nymetroparents.com/calendar for upcoming events.

18. Dino Days

Travel back in time—to the Jurassic period, to be exact—at **Field Station: Dinosaurs** in Secaucus, NJ (in nearby Hudson County). This 20-acre zoo-like adventure park, where the "animals" are actually animatronic dinosaurs, typically opens Memorial Day weekend. Get more information at nymetroparents.com/nj-dinos.

19. Fun on the Farm

Take a day trip to nearby Putnam County in late May for **Little Folk Farm Days** at Green Chimneys in Brewster (nymetroparents.com/green-chimneys). Kids can ride the ponies, watch live shows, do crafts, and play games at this nonprofit that focuses on animal therapy and nature education.

20. Spring into History

On late spring and summer weekends, the Fort Montgomery State Historic Site (nymetroparents.com/ft-montgomery) in nearby Orange County (690 Route 9W in Fort Montgomery, just north of Bear Mountain) hosts **living history demonstrations** complete with costumed interpreters and musket and cannon firings (featuring the fort's pride and joy, a 32-pound cannon named George).

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Courtesy HLT Entertainment