



Sesame Family Newsletter

September 5, 2007

The nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street and so much more



For Parents

Grandparents!

Yaaay!

by Jordan Brown

A father muses on the magic of grandparents.

Featuring:

- Free Babysitting & Other Perks
- Celebrating National Grandparents Day (Sept 9)
- Staying in Touch Across the Miles
- Flashback and Flashforward

> [Read this issue](#)

Games and More:

Celebrate Grandparents! Sesame Street E-Cards Say "I love you" to Grams and Gramps with a Sesame Street E-Card.

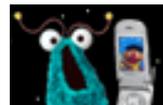
- [Sesame Street E-Cards](#)
- [Granny Bird's Holiday Feast](#)
- [Sticker World](#)
- [Weekly Trivia](#)

From the Workshop



[A charitable gift to support Sesame Workshop will go a long way...](#)

Sesame Store



[Get Sesame Street ringtones and wallpapers for your cellphone at Sesame Street Mobile!](#)

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New Balance encourages kids to celebrate their individuality. We are dedicated to making kids shoes in a variety of sizes, widths and colors to ensure that every kid can find their perfect fit. New Balance...We Fit Kids.

 [Read all about it!](#)

Grandparents! Yaaay!

FREE BABYSITTING & OTHER PERKS

Grandparents bring out the best in their grandchildren -- and vice versa! Whenever Finn and Olivia (ages 6 and 2) spend time with Gram and Pop (my wife Ellen's parents) or hang out with Bubbie and Zaidie (my parents), everyone becomes a kid again. Whether they are playing hide-and-seek, blowing bubbles, or watering the garden together, "grandparent time" offers a delightful mixture of laughter, learning, and unabashed spoiling. ("Here! Have another cookie!") Watching the bond grow between our children and their grandparents is one of the most delightful aspects of being a parent.

And... let's not forget the perks! Did I mention FREE babysitting? When the grandparents babysit for Finn and Olivia, it's a wonderful win-win situation for everyone. Ellen and I might get the chance to see a movie in an actual movie theater, or perhaps share a meal out without being interrupted with cries of "Mommy! Olivia got into the markers!" or "Daddy! Satchmo peed on the rug!" (Lucky for us, grandparents love to babysit for pets, too!) Meanwhile, the kids get to show off their latest skills ("Check this out, Gram, a backwards somersault!" "Hey, Bubbie, wanna see me do ballet?"), or have fun exploring the grandparents' stuff. Olivia loves playing "dress up" with her grandmothers' jewelry and clothes.

One of Finn's favorite places in the world is Pop's Shed. This small wooden backyard shed is loaded with tools and other odds-and-ends. That Finn loves this spot is no wonder, considering his mechanical inclination began in toddlerhood. No one will be surprised if Finn becomes an engineer or inventor when he grows up. Whatever the future may hold, Pop is always eager to let Finn explore this shed, and encourages him take home treasures such as an assortment of nuts and bolts, or a retractable tape measure.

Grandparents also have the amazing superpower of Mega-Patience. When Finn and Olivia behave rambunctiously, and do the sorts of things that might drive Ellen and me up the walls, their grandparents instinctively figure out ways to defuse the mayhem WITHOUT resorting to time-outs, taking away privileges, or screaming (the triumvirate of tactics too often used by frazzled parents, like me.) My mother has a real knack for coming up with creative distractions. When all else fails, I can always count on my parents to regale Finn and Olivia with embarrassing stories from my childhood. ("Zaidie, tell me the story about Daddy throwing up on his first day of school!")



A SPECIAL KIND OF LOVE
Through their grandparents, preschoolers learn empathy.

BABIES SENSE THEIR GRANDPARENTS
The notion of a family network begins to take shape.

THE BOND INTENSIFIES
School children find a haven in grandparental support.



CELEBRATING NATIONAL GRANDPARENTS DAY (SEPT 9)

Many National holidays strike me as ridiculous. Do we really need Penguin Awareness Day? What's up with National Dance Like a Chicken Day? And, someone clearly had too much time on his hands when he founded National Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day. But, one holiday that definitely deserves more fanfare is National Grandparents Day, which falls on September 9th this year. It's a pity more people don't even know this holiday exists. This day presents a wonderful opportunity to honor these important family members. Here are some activities you might try in your home.

CREATE "I LOVE YOU" CARDS -- Children who are fortunate enough to have living grandparents can make and send their grandparents a special card to celebrate this day. The project doesn't have to be time consuming. My kids whip up simple finger paintings that have nearly caused their grandparents to swoon. While it is possible for kids to send an email to their grandparents on this special day, lo-tech cards are often the most meaningful. If your children don't have living grandparents, they can celebrate this holiday by sending a homemade card to another older relative, or even an elderly friend. Growing up, I had a number of "honorary grandparents"--senior citizens in our neighborhood who were wonderful family friends.

USE PHOTOS TO SPARK STORIES -- To commemorate National Grandparents Day, I plan to dig out some old pictures of Gram, Pop, Bubbie, and Zaidie. My children marvel when they see what their grandparents looked like as children. When Finn and Olivia want me to tell a story about when I was growing up, I'm often stumped. However, when I open family photo albums, the stories just flow and flow.

MAKE A PHOTO FAMILY TREE -- A more organized photo activity that helps children learn about their family's history is creating a photographic family tree. Start with your child (or children) at the trunk, and expand upward to include the names and pictures of parents, grandparents etc. As you work on the family tree, share stories about great-grandparents and other relatives that are no longer alive. It might even spark an interest in genealogy, and encourage your family to get in touch with long-distance relatives. (See the link at the right for further instructions on this activity.)

BAKE A FAMILY RECIPE -- When I was growing up, it was always a treat to cook with my grandmothers. My Grandma Eleanor used to make amazing lasagna and chocolate chip meringue cookies, while my Grandma Ruth's specialties were matzo balls and rugelach cookies. Anytime I make these dishes in our kitchen for Finn and Olivia, I feel a



FAMILY MOBILE

[Kids and grandparents can create a photographic family tree.](#)

MY FIRST SCRAPBOOK

[Your kids and their grandparents can put together a special book of memories.](#)

GINGERBREAD GRANDPARENTS

[Bake gingerbread cookies that look like grandma and grandpa!](#)

GOODNIGHT, MRS. HILLGARTNER, WHEREVER YOU ARE

[A touching ceremony bids farewell to a beloved grandparent.](#)

special connection to the past. If your children's grandparents live far away, perhaps part of your celebration might be baking something sweet and mailing it to them.

STAYING IN TOUCH ACROSS THE MILES

We live just a couple hours from Ellen's parents, so fortunately Finn and Olivia are able to visit with them often. However, since my folks live much further way, staying in touch often requires some creativity and technology. During car trips, for example, when my children start to get antsy, one source of distraction is letting them use my cell phone to call long-distance relatives. (Fortunately, I have a flat-rate billing plan, so I don't worry about the cost when Finn goes into incredible detail about his plan to build an inter-galactic spaceship.)

About a month ago, my tech-savvy dad figured out a new way for Finn and Olivia to communicate with himself and my mother. My parents sent us a small, inexpensive webcam (short for "web camera") that we can use to have live "video phone calls." So far, most of these webcam experiences have involved Finn getting very close to the camera and saying, "Check out THIS silly face, Zaidie!" However, I suspect that during the school year, it will be a nice way for my children to share projects they are working on, and see their grandparents' smiling faces on a frequent basis. Finn and Olivia only use the webcam with Ellen or I present as there are, unfortunately, dangers lurking online.



REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE

[Connecting with Grandma and Grandpa over the holidays](#)

YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN
[Here's how to relax, connect, and have fun with the folks.](#)

FLASHBACK AND FLASHFORWARD

Although all of my grandparents have passed away, their memories are very much alive. Anytime I figure out a wacky way to make my kids giggle, I feel as though I'm honoring my Grandpas Milt and Max--both who delighted in making others laugh. In an age where letter-writing has almost become a lost art, I sometimes think of how much I loved getting "real mail" from my Grandmas Ruth and Eleanor, and will go the extra mile to write to a loved one on paper. Writing this newsletter has once again sparked their memories, and made me think how very grateful I am to have had them in my life for many years.

The other day, Finn began a story with, "When I'm a dad, I'm going to..." Hearing this from a 6 year old made me smile, and ponder what it might be like to be a grandparent some day. I can only hope that if this happens, I will be the



kind of grandparent that will inspire and entertain my grandkids the way Finn and Olivia's grandparents have over the years, and the way my grandparents did for years before that.

Have a fun-filled Grandparents Day.

Jordan Brown

Sesame Workshop

Weekly Trivia

Did you know?

The portrait of Mr. Hooper next to Big Bird's nest was actually drawn by Carroll Spinney, the Muppeteer who plays Big Bird? It's true! In addition to playing the part of Sesame Street's favorite bird, Spinney is also an accomplished cartoonist!

FROM THE WORKSHOP

In 1968 when it began, it was one little street. Now Sesame Street reaches around the world to over 120 countries. Your gift of support will allow Sesame Workshop, the non-profit organization behind Sesame Street, to use media for what may be the greatest good, helping children around the world reach their highest potential.

[Support the Workshop today!](#)

COMMENTS? QUESTIONS?

[Tell us what's on your mind.](#) Kindly note that we are unable to respond to every email received.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

Sesame Workshop is a nonprofit educational organization making a meaningful difference in children's lives around the world. Founded in 1968, the Workshop changed television forever with the legendary Sesame Street. Today, the Workshop continues to innovate on behalf of children in 120 countries, using its proprietary research methodology to ensure its programs and products are engaging and enriching. Sesame Workshop is behind award-winning programs like Dragon Tales and Sagwa, The Chinese Siamese Cat, Pinky Dinky Doo and ground breaking multimedia productions in South Africa, Egypt and Russia. As a nonprofit, Sesame Workshop puts the proceeds it receives from sales of Sesame Street, Dragon Tales and Sagwa products right back into its educational projects for children around the world. Find the Workshop online at www.sesameworkshop.org

