



The Community  
School

Passages Program



# Passages Press

## Supermom

by Kelly Benner

When I look into Ethen's eyes and when he smiles at me a feeling runs through me that is just the best. He is my son; I have a son; I'm a mom. I have been for seven months, but I'm still in shock. I never thought I would have a baby, but I did and I am loving every minute of it. He is so much fun. As weird as this sounds, I like it when he cries. Because when I pick him up and those tears go away it makes me feel good. It makes me feel like a hero, his hero. Supermom!

When I had Ethen motherhood began. I was so excited to see him grow and learn. I feed him when he is hungry, I change him when he is wet, I give him a bath when he is dirty, and I play with him when he is bored. I read to him mostly at night and talk to him all the time. Bonding is getting close to each other. I feel very close to him because we haven't left each other's side for more than two hours since he was born.

Being a parent brings out every emotion there is – happy when he is happy, scared when he is sick. I've never felt sad about him, though. I get frustrated and a little stressed out when he won't take a nap and cries till I give in and pick him up. Bonding is about being both physically and emotionally connected to my child.

Mothers bond even before the baby is born. You know when they are hungry because you are

hungry. You know when they are asleep because that's when you can get some sleep.

A good bonding technique is reading to your baby, because not only are you bonding, but the baby is learning. Ethen has a book with farm animals in it so he can learn the names and sounds they make. He also has Good Night Moon, Runaway Bunny, and I Love You Forever and others. I point to the picture when I read the words. I'm in the rocking chair holding him while I read, so he feels loved while he learns.

Another fun bonding technique is giving Ethen a bath. We get to play, splash and get clean. I let Ethen play for a while before I wash him, that way bathing is fun. Through the whole bath Ethen is smiling and laughing. Interacting with Ethen in the bath is showing him that Mama is fun to be with. Bath time offers an amazing opportunity for bonding and skin-to-skin contact between you and your baby. By now, your baby has figured out that taking a bath means some serious one-on-one time with Mom or Dad, the center of his world.

Feeding is the time you bond the most. Because you look into the baby's eyes, you hold him tight in your arms and that is when the baby feels safe and relaxed. Another way that makes feeding bonding is when you sing to your baby or rock him to sleep. Changing diapers goes with feeding. In a weird way, it's fun because you can

make it fun by playing peek-a-boo or bite his toes or even letting your baby help by holding the diaper for you. Changing a 7-month-old's diaper is also hard because he wiggles and tries to roll over. It's a challenge, but being a parent is a challenge in itself.

One thing that I love to do with Ethen is play. It is awesome! I get to be a kid again and play with toys. Not only am I having fun with Ethen, but we are bonding. He is also learning. Playing on the floor with your child is good in so many ways, because you are teaching him how to crawl, you are teaching him about cause and effect, and you are also teaching him that his parents are fun and that he can feel safe with you.

As Ethen and I go throughout our day I show and tell Ethen what I'm doing. When I cook, clean, read, or write- it doesn't matter what I do, I always include Ethen in it! I also just talk to him as if he could talk back. I tell him about my day. And ask him about his. Because I do this I hope he grows up trusting me to tell me what is on his mind or if he has a problem. And that is bonding. Trust, love, and simply enjoying your baby!

## My Two Pregnancies

by Amanda Yates

I've had two children. My pregnancies were very different and very similar at the same time. There were a few physical differences but the most noticeable issues were life changes. My age, maturity level and previous experiences all contributed to making my second pregnancy unique from my first. The actual birthing policies at the hospital had also changed during the three years between my children.

I became pregnant with my first child in March 1998 when I was only seventeen. I knew nothing about babies or children or being pregnant. Some girls grow up playing with dolls and dreaming about having a baby. I was much more of a tomboy. Everything that happened to me, physically and emotionally was something of a surprise. I didn't really have a plan for anything, I just sort of took it in as it happened.

The first fun part of pregnancy was telling my family. Because I was so young, I was hesitant to tell them at first. I was trying to find the right time and way to tell them. My boyfriend's family already knew about the baby, and unfortunately, my future sister-in-law took it upon herself to call and tell my parents. There was a lot of drama early on in my pregnancy. People said we were too young, too inexperienced. They asked a lot of questions about how we would take care of ourselves, let alone a baby. The baby's father and I decided to get married in August. Our families stood by us in this decision, but they weren't shy in telling us that we were taking on two huge responsibilities.

While all this was going on, I also had to contend with morning sickness. For my entire first trimester, I felt sick. While I know now that this is normal at the time I thought something might be wrong. Plus, I had to hide my sickness from my mother as I didn't want her to suspect I might be pregnant. After those first three months, the nausea passed and the hunger started. I was ravenous all the time. I especially craved red meat. I could eat steak and hamburger for breakfast, lunch and dinner. And I often did. I assumed pregnancy meant I could eat as much as I wanted, so I did. My final weight gain ended up being seventy pounds. I felt huge, but again, I didn't know any different.

I didn't really have anyone to talk to about pregnancy. My family wasn't the type to give lots of advice and I didn't even know enough at the time to know I needed the help. I spent all of my time with my husband, and honestly, we were like two kids ourselves. After living with his mother for several months, we finally got our own apartment a few months before Elvis was born. I don't remember making any long term plans for the baby, and the apartment was so tiny that the baby things we did have didn't really fit. I spent quite a bit of time at home during my pregnancy, and it kind of drove me crazy. I've always been a people person. I like working and interacting with people. I was really tired of being cooped up with no one to talk to, and no money to do anything.

I was really looking forward to having the baby and starting life again.

I was due on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999. I didn't end up delivering Elvis until January 20<sup>th</sup>. Like all the

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women in my family I had to be induced. It seems like I spent forever waiting in the hospital with an IV stuck in my arm, waiting for something to happen. Women all around me were having babies, but mine just didn't want to come out. In reality I spent a day and a half on the Pitocin before it started to work. It was a very clinical experience. I was hooked up to the IV and they gave me pain medication. I was lying on my back and I felt like things were out of my control. Elvis was born at two o'clock in the afternoon, after 25 hours of labor. As soon as he was born, the nurse took him away and cleaned him and weighed him and did all those tests. I barely remember seeing him. They whisked him away so quickly.

Fortunately, Elvis was a healthy 8 pounds and 10 ounce baby. As soon as they did put him in my arms, it felt completely right. I fell fiercely in love with him. When it came time to feed him, the nurse showed me how to position the baby and the breast and Elvis latched right on. I was glad something about having a baby was easy for a change. Elvis was a good newborn. He ate when he was supposed to, he slept quite a bit, and he was good natured the rest of the time. He was the perfect baby. Which is a good thing, because I walked out of the hospital completely unprepared.

When I took Elvis home, I had no clue as to anything. I must have thought that I would just figure everything out after he was born, that knowing how to take care of an infant was automatically programmed into a woman's DNA. I thought it would just happen. Well, things happened all right, but I didn't know how to handle them. I didn't know how to even give my child a bath. I didn't know whom to call to ask. Luckily, my uncle stopped by to visit and I mentioned the problem to him. Surprisingly enough, he knew what to do. My uncle, who is a drinking truck-driving bachelor, knew how to bathe a newborn and I didn't. It wasn't a great beginning. And the worst part was, I didn't even know how much I didn't know.

Somehow, Elvis and I managed to survive his first years. We made it through several moves, and jobs and a divorce. I basically learned as we went. I was fortunate enough to find some people along the way, who genuinely cared for the both of us. They helped teach me to be a mother. It's true

that some parts, like love, come easy, but there's a great deal more that requires real effort to learn. After three years, I almost felt ready to do it all again, which is good, because I was pregnant with Michael.

This pregnancy was much easier physically than my first one. I didn't feel sick for the first three months, which was a nice change. I also was much more aware of what I was eating. I'd learned the hard way from my first pregnancy that putting on baby weight is much easier than taking it off. In fact, I'd finally lost the last of my extra weight with Elvis just before I became pregnant with Mikey. I still craved red meat, and I ate quite a bit of it during this pregnancy. However, I know knew to avoid the potato chips and french fries and candy that I munched on regularly during my first pregnancy.

When I became pregnant with Mikey, I was working full time as a manager at Denny's. I was engaged to Michael's father and we had a comfortable home together. I had a car and money and much more independence than my first time around. I didn't have to go crazy sitting at home by myself. I felt so much more confident having a baby at this point in my life. I knew what to expect and I knew I could handle it. I started preparing for a baby much sooner. I knew I needed things like bouncy seats and swings and I had fun buying the cute little outfits. I think I spent my first pregnancy being nervous, and my second pregnancy being excited.

I had spent the day at the mall with Elvis and a friend when my contractions started. I wasn't worried. I had a pretty good idea of what was happening to me. I waited until things seemed to be progressing before I called the midwife. That was another change from my first delivery. This time I had a midwife instead of a doctor. I liked feeling more in control of my body and my pregnancy. I felt more aware of what was going on, and I got to participate in making decisions. I felt the first delivery was something the hospital planned. My second delivery was about my choices.

Michael was a natural delivery. I didn't have any drugs. When Mikey was born, they immediately put him on my stomach, skin to skin. It was amazing. I was able to see and touch him and start the bonding right away. I liked that so

much better than the first time, when Elvis was taken away so quickly. It was a much more relaxed process the second time. Michael was also a very good baby, he nursed right away without any trouble.

I left the hospital the next day, feeling confident about my abilities. I knew how to diaper and bathe an infant. I knew how to hold them, I knew he wouldn't break if I picked him up or his brother gave him a hug. I also knew that if I did have a question, there were plenty of people who were more than willing to help me find an answer. I think the biggest difference between my pregnancies was me. I had grown up. I had gained experience and knowledge and confidence.

## On Being a New Mom

by Katie Stimpson

Changing diapers, giving baths, and dodging bullets of partially digested milk: these are some of the things it takes to be a mom. Aside from all these things there's seeing the first smile, the first step, and getting those first drooly kisses.

When you're a first-time mom these things are so amazing. For me, the first time I saw my son, and



held my son, were the most amazing times of my life. Times I will never forget. But mothering is hard work with sometimes no sleep at all. We mothers can walk around for days looking like zombies and feeling worse. Just getting into the shower feels like a spa day! But being able to do it is amazing and rewarding. And even

though they scream all the time, spit up, and can ruin a diaper in as little time as it takes to change one, I love being a mom and I love my son Sam...even if he's spitting up on my brand new pants or howling at 2 a.m.

## That Girl

Twisted

A knot no sailor could master  
A dance never to be danced  
A drink too strong for any man

Wait for the rain

Wash away the visible layers  
Expose bare wires

Gather around to see

Like a horrible car accident  
A house adorned in yellow ribbon

What's inside?

A girl, calling for us to help?  
A girl, hardened, not needing?

No, just another forgotten soul  
Lost her place, never to find

That girl

## Where did all the innocence go

Lullabies

Turned swanky ass shaking tunes  
Sweet love filled humming  
Turned disease filled cat calls

Babies

Turned walking connect the dots  
Children's happy laughter  
Turned mothers uncontrollable sobs

Dreams turned nightmare

Where did all the innocence go

- Renee Krummes

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## My Child was a Stranger

by Sheena Stone

My child was a stranger that I hardly knew,  
I had never seen her, but her home was my womb.  
Even though I had never met her, I felt like I could  
tell her anything, and sing songs to her, too.  
My child was a stranger, but I told her I loved her  
Every night  
I told her I would always be there for her.  
She and I would always eat together in restaurants  
But she never took up an extra seat,  
because she sat within me.  
My child was a stranger that lay dormant inside,  
But we always went for walks, and when we did  
People would talk, they also loved her,  
But never knew her.  
If I could see the child who was inside,  
she would always have a smile,  
because she knew she was never going to be  
alone, and neither would I.  
I gave birth to my child who had been a stranger  
For months,  
and when we locked eyes with each other,  
I found out, my child was never a stranger,  
We knew each other all along!

## Meeting Two Challenges

by Ashley Luce

I was so proud of myself when I completed my very first scarf! It is so beautiful, and I think it is so beautiful to me because I am the one who made it. Overall, I think I put about six hours of work into it, if not more. When it was finally completed I was very pleased with myself. I made it out of bright multi-colored fun fur.

I had some trouble casting off where it was my first knitting project and I wasn't sure what to do. My teacher Andrea, showed me how to do it. We spent some time with knitting things and she also showed me a few more things such as how to cast

on and weave odds and ends into the project. It was great fun!

Along with this project Andrea challenged me to something that I do not believe she was aware was one of my biggest fears. I did it, though. I picked up the phone and called Pam Allen, a very respected knitter. I had a great interview with her that made me realize that there is a lot more to knitting than meets the common eye. Even for people that have been knitting all their lives, they still don't know how much more it out there.

Pam told me all about how she used to knit for magazines and pattern covers. Also how models would wear the things that she knit. It was all very interesting to me. I was very unaware that things like that even happened. Especially to someone who used to live as close as Camden, Maine. She was very pleasant and seemed very happy to discuss knitting with me. Talking with her seemed to make my fear seem stupid, but I think if I had to do it all over again, I would still be scared and nervous.



I also interviewed my grandmother. She knits for pleasure, not for income. She mostly likes to knit when she gets home from work and before she goes to bed, because like Pam, it helps her unwind. Also, my grandmother started knitting about the same age that Pam did, but my grandmother never decided to go over and beyond the pleasure of creating something as Pam did.

What I got out of this was more than just a scarf and knowledge of knitting. It was overcoming a lifelong fear. When I was in school and we had to interview people, I always had a partner. I either always made my partner do the interview or I interviewed someone that I knew well. I don't know why this has always been a fear for me, because I am not a shy person at all, but I thank Andrea and Pam very much for helping me overcome my fear.

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## Things to Think about Before Having Sex

by Leana Moon

When I read that more than 50% of people aged 15-25 have an STI, or that 70% of people that have an STI show no symptoms, it kind of scares me. It also makes me ask questions like why are all these people getting infected? Why aren't they more careful? I really don't know why someone would put themselves at risk of getting a potentially life threatening disease, a little bit of fun really isn't worth it to me. This is also some information that people should think about before having sex.

STI stands for sexually transmitted infection. The name basically describes itself; you get it from having sex. Even if you are only having oral sex or anal sex, these infections can still be spread. Some STI, like HIV, chlamidia, gonorrhea and hepatitis B are spread by semen, blood or vaginal fluids. Other STI, like Herpes, HPV and syphilis are spread by skin-to-skin contact. An STI is something that should not be taken lightly because an untreated STI can lead to infertility in men and women, and if you have one, it increases the chance of you getting another one, or even HIV/AIDS. Also, human papilloma virus (also known as genital warts) is one of the leading causes in cervical cancer.

The best way to prevent getting an STI is to not have sex. If that is not an option for you, you can also use other methods to help protect yourself. Some ways are to limit your number of sexual partners; the more partners you have the more likely you are to get an STI. A condom is another way to protect you, but if skin that is not covered by the condom has an STI on it, it can still be passed. Also if a condom is misused or breaks, you will most likely get an STI if the other person has an STI. If you see a rash or sore, or even suspect that your partner may have an STI, be smart and don't have sex with them. You should also get tested at least once a year, or every time you change sexual partners to make sure you do not have an STI, or spread it to others. Like I stated before, 70% of people with an STI show no symptoms, so even if you don't think you have one, still be safe and get tested.

Besides an STI, there is another risk to think about when you have sex, and that is pregnancy. A lot of young girls who are not ready to have a baby end up pregnant. I myself was one of them. I had to grow up very fast, and going from 15 to mom is not easy. I love my son to death, but sometimes I do wish I had a little more time to grow up. I also know many other teens that had children before they were really ready. Some of them are doing wonderful, but others really had no business having children at such a young age. You need to realize that when you have a child, you don't just live for yourself anymore, you live for your child. That mean getting up in the middle of the night when they are hungry, or changing the most awful thing you have ever smelt. I will say it is not easy all the time, but it still is something that you have to do if you decide to keep your child.

Just like an STI, a baby is not something that should be taken lightly. Pregnancy is not just a thing, it is a beautiful process of nurturing a precious little baby inside of you. To me, a baby isn't something you can just get rid of and the problem will go away. Some people might consider abortion, which I personally don't think is right. A lot of people go through with an abortion and feel horrible after. I personally don't think I could go through the process. I am not the best with pain, and the thought of what I was actually doing would hurt way too much. Still, a lot of women have abortions. They may feel it is best for them, or parents may feel it is best for their children, like in my case. My parents strongly thought I shouldn't have a baby at 15, they thought it wasn't the best thing for me. For a short while I was considering an abortion, but after I talked with my boyfriend and other people who thought it was best to keep my baby I made up my mind. My parents were still upset, but shortly after that they became more O.K with me having a baby. Now they love Daniel to death, and I am sure they are happy I kept him. Something that I think is fine is adoption. You don't have to harm your child, and you will give someone the chance to have a wonderful child. This may also be hard, but I think I would feel better about adoption than abortion.

Just like STI, the only sure way to not get pregnant is to not have sex. Some birth control options are up to 99% effective, but they have to

be used correctly every time. If you use a condom, it has to be put on correctly, if you use the pill you have to take it at the same time every day. Sometimes it is difficult to use correctly, and if your birth control is not used properly the chances of you getting pregnant increases dramatically. And if you do not use any form of protection for one year you have an 85% chance of getting pregnant. That is a pretty high risk. There are a lot of products out there today, from a shot, to a pill, or even a patch or implant. I suggest looking around and finding something that will work best for you. It is also a good idea to talk to your partner about birth control. You can also increase the effectiveness of your birth control by using another with it. A condom can also be added to a patch or the pill. Another thing that can always be added is spermicide (a product that kills sperm) these are things that you can get without a prescription and a male or female can buy them and have them handy.

Today, sex seems like no big deal, or that every one should have sex. In reality it is not like that at all. Sex is a very big deal, and not every one is doing it. More than half of high school students reported that they were virgins. And most of teens that do have sex wish that they had waited. I hope that after reading this you get a better idea of what can really happen if you have sex. Both men and women should take STI and pregnancy very seriously.

## The Book Corner

### A Northern Light

by Jennifer Donnelly

Reviewed by Ashley Luce

A Northern Light takes place in 1906 in a small farming community. The main character is Mathilda Gokey (Mattie), and the story is told from her point of view. If the story had been told from another character's point of view, it would not have been anywhere near as good. Mattie had many emotions and she was very interesting. She was not shy with her feelings and let them be known; I really liked that about her. In a way, she reminds me of myself.



This book was written so well that I felt like I was in Inlet while it was happening. One of my favorite parts was not only very funny, but made me feel as though I was there while it was happening.

*"...And then there was a hard twang on the rope that I both felt and heard, and the force of it jerked me forward, as if I had caught a big fish, and I gasped out loud as the coils bit into my hand and then there was another sound...the sound of table six hollering at the top of his lungs in surprise, and then shock, and then horror, as he tripped and tumbled headfirst through the air, and landed with a thick, wet thud in a heaping pile of dog shit."*

I like this part so well because they are giving table six what he deserves for being so perverted to the waitresses at the Glenmore Inn. Again this reminds me of something that I would do to get back at someone.

Something that I find interesting about Jennifer Donnelly is how she can write whole paragraphs without a period until the end. I think she did an excellent job writing this book because there were so many little stories going on inside one big one. I also loved how she flipped the story back and forth through every chapter, but towards the end they overlapped. It was so interesting and made me want to read more and more.

I often find myself really relating to Mattie. I admire her because she is so strong-willed. Even though she is engaged to Royal, and her father didn't want her to go to college, she went anyway. If I were in her shoes with all the other things going on in my life that she had, I don't think that I could have been so strong as her and still have gone anyway. If Mattie really existed I would love to have her as a friend. I think that she would always keep life interesting and there would never be a dull moment with her around. Mattie really stands out in the book because she is very unlike the rest of the characters. She loves to read, and the only two other characters that enjoy reading are Weaver and Miss Wilcox. The difference is, everyone in Mattie's life with the exception of the other two readers try to discourage her from reading. Mattie never lets that bother her though. She also stands out because she does a good job of juggling all her responsibilities. She has to take care of her family, cook, do chores, and work in the summer. Through all this she still finds time for

her friends, Royal, reading, and writing. I do not understand how she does it and so well.

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone, any age, male or female. I enjoyed it very much and it is the best book I have read in a very long time, and it very well may be the best book I have EVER read.

## **Kite Runner**

by *Halled Hosseini*

Reviewed by *Renee Krummes*

Kite Runner is a good book about a boy and his story of growing up in Afghanistan. Amir is a boy from a powerful and wealthy family. Hassan and his father have been with Amir and his father since the beginning; they are the help, and they live in a hut on the property. Amir's father Baba cares about these two people very much.

Amir feels he has to try hard to win his father's love from Hassan. One day he loses out on the chance to save Hassan from a horrible tragedy because of his jealousy. Amir's conscience eats at him until he starts lying and creating trouble so Hassan and his father will leave and move away. The guilt becomes too much to bear for Amir.

Amir and Hassan never see each other again. I feel that if Amir could have once just stood up and told the truth, maybe things could have been better, maybe Hassan could have moved with Amir and Baba to America, maybe Hassan and his family could have had a better chance; they could have saved their friendship.

Maybe. Then maybe the story wouldn't have been so sad; then maybe it wouldn't have been such a great book.



## **Alicia: My Story**

by *Alicia Appleman-Jurman*

January 3, 2005

Dear Alicia,

I'm a 20-year-old woman. I started reading *Alicia: My Story* when I was in the eighth grade, but I dropped out of school, so I never got to finish the book. I got pregnant when I was 19 and enrolled in The Community School's "Passages" program. When my teacher and I were talking about books that we have read, I told her about how I started your book when I was 14 and never got to finish it. I told her I would still like to read it.

Well, she ended up ordering the book for me. I have finished the book and told my teacher that I would love to write to you!

I love your story, and I think that you are a strong brave woman. The way you cared for your family and friends and people you didn't even know - that was so heart touching to me. When I started reading your story, it was so hard to put the book down. You were very detailed about everything. The way you made it, how you had to beg and work to get food for your friends and family. The way you stood up to people amazed me. The guts and bravery you had to have to do that!

You were so determined to save and do whatever you could do for the people, before you thought about yourself. You were so determined to find your friends and family after the war, which I thought was one of the sweetest things.

I know you wanted to become a doctor and I was wondering if you became one or not? I was also wondering how and what you did when you got into the States? Did anyone adopt you?

I was really glad to read your book and it has taught me a lot. I am glad that you were a survivor, and you definitely have an angel on your shoulder looking over you. I was glad to read that you have a husband and three children. Congratulations and God bless you and your family!

Sincerely,

*Amanda Cates*

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