

# Play Dates

## 10

ACTIVITIES  
YOUR WHOLE  
FAMILY  
WILL LOVE

**I**t's summertime, and the livin' is easy. It's also when you and your family have the time to fit in the kind of stuff that's tough to fit in the rest of the year. Lucky for us Westchesterites, there are loads of entertaining, creative, and educational activities that you and your crew can indulge in on less than a tank of gas—meaning you don't have to listen to a child moaning from the back-seat, "Are we there yet?"

BY JENNY HIGGONS  
*photographs*  
by Mark Vergari





## River Ridge Equestrian Center

**Best for ages 6 and up** **It's great because** Just seeing the horses up close is fun, but throw in names like Spur, Freckles, and Dude and who wouldn't smile? Plus, you and the kids can learn how to ride Western-style in the River Ridge ring. Or head outside (with a guide) to mosey

on down one of several routes on the woody Hutchinson River Trail for one- and two-hour rides. **Remember to** Make a reservation at least one day beforehand. **Bonus** Little ones (ages 2–7) can get in on the equine action any day or time with outdoor pony rides, sans reservation.

The free outdoor petting zoo has sheep, a donkey, and miniature ponies who love to be fed carrots and apples. **Do it** Lessons: \$40 a person per half hour; trail rides: \$30 a person per hour; pony rides: \$5 per ride; 8 a.m.–6 p.m. daily; 960A California Rd.; Eastchester; 633-0303.



## The Hudson River Museum

**Best for ages 5–16**

**It's great because** The hot summer fog won't deter you from getting lost in space at the Andrus Planetarium. Be dazzled by stars, constellations, and even a speeding comet in the reprieve of the auditorium's cushy chairs and cool air. Artsy moms, pops, and their kids can create art projects in the family workshops and stroll through some of the six galleries.

**Remember to Go** with a picnic lunch and blanket. Food is banned on museum grounds, but you can eat outside right next door at Trevor Park.

**Bonus** Got history buffs in the family? If so, go next door for a self-guided tour of Glenview Mansion Museum, which was built in 1877 and reflects the lifestyle of its turn-of-the-century residents, the John Trevor family.

**Do it** \$3 ages 5–16; \$5 adults; Wed.–Sun. 12–5 p.m., Fri. 12–8 p.m.; closed Mon. and Tues.; Planetarium shows: 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, and 3:30 p.m. (\$1 ages 5–16, \$2 adults); free on Fridays at 7 p.m.; family workshops: free; Sat. and Sun.; 1–3 p.m.; 511 Warburton Ave.; Yonkers; 963-4550; hrm.org.

### LITTLE BUDDHA FAMILY YOGA CENTER

**Best for ages 3 and up** **It's great because** It's never too early to start teaching kids the benefits of exercise. Yoga is "the" exercise of the decade, with advantages that blend physical fitness with emotional well-being. Learn breathing exercises, stretches, and relaxation techniques, as well as postures such as Downward-Facing Dog and Cobra. The classes are offered for parents with kids in three age groups: 3–4, 5–7, and 8 and up. **Remember to** Dress in loose-fitting clothes. **Bonus** The Center also hosts 90-minute birthday parties on Sundays for up to 15 kids ages 3 and older. You supply the chow, drinks, and paper goods, and the staff helps with setup and cleanup. **Do it** \$25 for one child and one parent; \$35 for three or more family members; \$375 per birthday party; Sat. 10 to 10:45 a.m.; 260 Katonah Ave.; Katonah; 232-2732; littlebuddhayoga.com.

### THE BEZAK ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATIONAL CENTER

**Best for ages 5 and up** **It's great because** It's a slice of the seashore without the traffic. Comb the beach for cool stuff that's washed up with the tides: driftwood, seashells, fish remains, and, yes, even coconuts from the Gulf of Mexico. At low tide, seagulls, herons, and willits swoop down to feast on the clams, fiddler crabs, and minnows that live in the tidal marsh. At the interpretive center, get face-to-face with live shrimp, striped bass, blue crab, and eels. **Remember to** Call first to make sure the Center's not tied up with classes (except on Fridays, when there are none). Have money for lunch at one of the pizza joints just steps away, or brown bag it in Habirshaw Park. **Bonus** You might spot some of the American bald eagles that live on the George Washington Bridge and swoop for fish in the Hudson. **Do it** Free; Mon.–Fri. 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–3 p.m.; 35 Alexander St.; Yonkers; 377-1900; bezzak.org.

## The Croton Sailing School

**Best for ages** 10 and up **It's great because** You don't need to own a boat to enjoy life on the water. Charter a sailboat for two, four, or six hours (six-person max.). Or, as an alternative, budding seafarers can take a two-day, basic, hands-on lesson. Set sail into Haverstraw Bay, and at the end, you'll be able

to rig a sailboat, cruise around, and return to port safely and with confidence. **Remember to** Bring water; seven hours in the sun is a real throat-patcher. Pack your own lunch if you don't want to grab one in town. **Bonus** After your hands-on lesson and one-day practice sail, you'll be certified by the American Sailing

Association, and the river will be yours to explore. **Do it** Charters are by the hour: \$70 for a 24-footer; \$85 for a 26-footer; and \$115 for a 34-footer; lessons: \$395 per person; Sat. and Sun.; Tues. and Wed.; Thurs. and Fri.; 8:45 a.m.–4 p.m.; Senasqua Boat Basin; Elliot Way; Croton; 271-6868; crotonsailing.com.



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## Wolf Conservation Center

**Best for ages** 6 and up **It's great because** Where the heck else in Westchester can you channel your primeval side and bay with wolves? Tune up your vocal cords for a spine-tingling sunset yowl within just a few feet of four of the enclosed canines, each of whom boasts a distinctive, haunting call. The staff instructs humans on how to howl correctly, i.e., to emit a howl that says "hello" instead of one that's hostile. **Remember to** Bring your own flashlights and pre-register for programs. **Bonus** Wolves For Kids is a wonderful introduction to lupine life for families with youngsters

ages 4 to 8. Children learn about the fallacies (no, wolves don't snack on humans) and myths (the Little Red Riding Hood story? The product of an active imagination) about wolves. Highlight: an up-close and "in-person" visit with the Center's beautiful resident wolves, Kaila, Apache, Lukas, and Atka. **Do it** Evening Howls: \$12 kids under 12, \$15 adults; 7 p.m.; July 6, 14, 20, 27, 28 for those with kids 6 and older; July 13 for those with kids under 6. Wolves For Kids: \$10 children under 12, \$12 adults; 10 a.m.; July 7, 17, 21; South Salem; 763-2373; nywolf.org.



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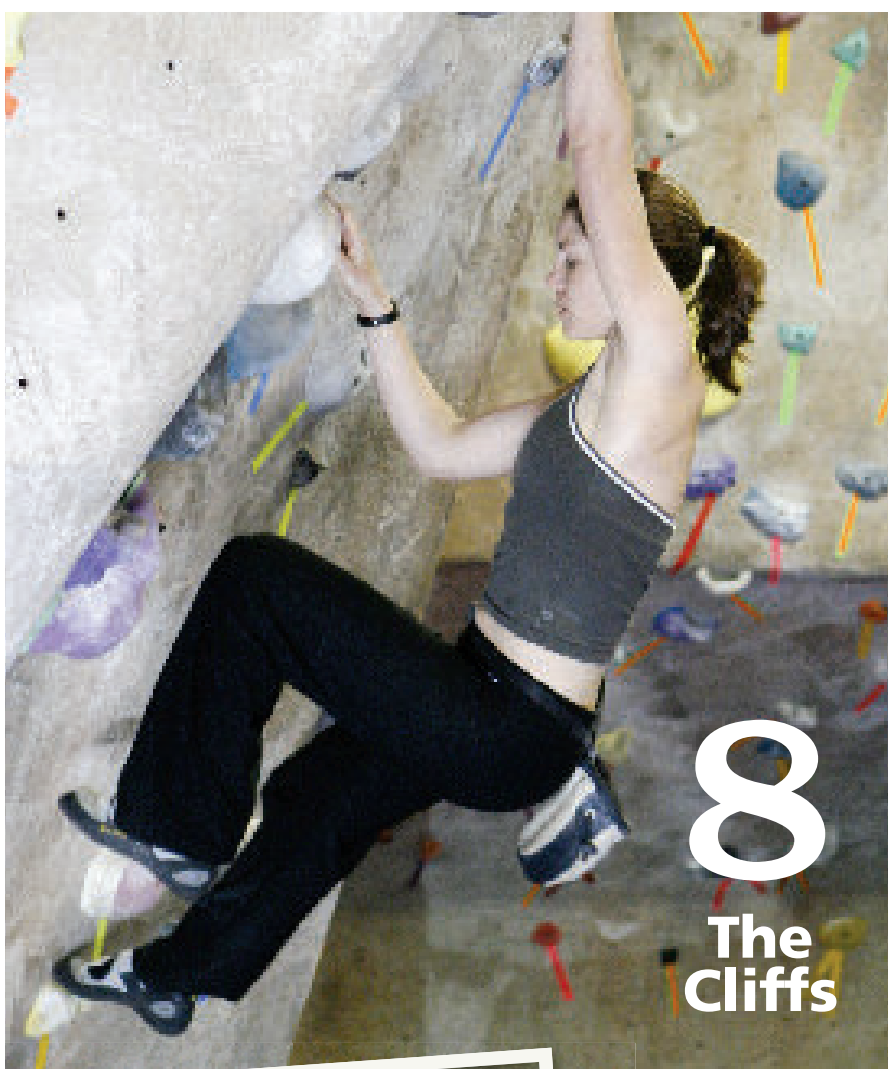
## Teatown Lake Reservation

**Best for ages** 3 and up **It's great because** These 834-acres are an alternative to yet another day at the town pool. Learn about owls, snakes, and frogs native to the Hudson Highlands and Hills. Or focus on the flora and fauna of swamps, forests, meadows, and ponds when you embark on a Saturday Habitat Safari. You can even hike 15 miles of marked trails and visit live animals at the nature center.

**Remember to** Wear comfy shoes, a brimmed hat, and bug spray.

**Bonus** The May plant sale; an October festival, with pumpkin carving and hayrides; and February's EagleFest, which celebrates the beautiful birds.

**Do it** \$6; Tues.–Sun. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.; Nature Center (free; Tues.–Sun. 9 a.m.–5 p.m.); Habitat Safari: \$5; 10–11:30 a.m.; 1600 Spring Valley Rd.; Ossining; 762-2912; teatown.org.



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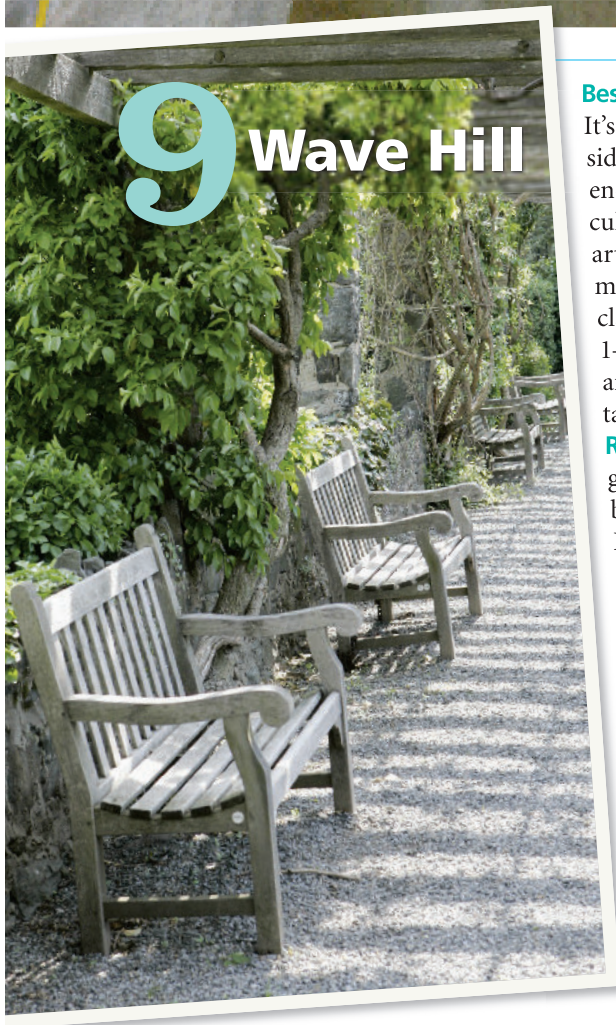
## The Cliffs

**Best for ages** 6 and up **It's great because** You get to climb to new heights—literally—without dealing with expensive plane tickets. OK, so it's not the Rockies, but these cliffs are challenging and exhilarating, with more than 13,000 square feet of “real life” terrain including roofs, overhangs, slabs, arêtes, and a rapel tower. Best of all: The climbs cater to all ages and abilities, so you can show your kids the ropes (sorry, we couldn't resist). Newbies can start off with the two-hour Family Climb Clinic, which teaches the safety and skills of rope climbing. Or, sign up for Climbing 101, a three-hour class that focuses on all the skills you'll need to climb safely in the gym. The professional, certified instructors cover all the basics: knot tying, harness use, verbal commands, and fastening techniques to get you moving in the vertical world.

**Remember to** Eat a healthy and hearty meal beforehand; the all-body workout you'll get will require all the energy and stamina you can muster.

**Bonus** The Cliffs rents all the latest climbing gear: (shoes \$5, harness \$3, belay device \$2, chalk bag \$2). If you'd like to purchase your equipment, The Cliffs has a full pro shop manned by experts in the field.

**Do it** Family Climb Clinic: \$30 per person; Climbing 101: \$40 per person; Mon.– Fri. 10 a.m.–10 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–8 p.m.; Sun. 9 a.m.–6 p.m.; 1 Commerce Park; Valhalla; 328-7625; thecliffscimbing.com.



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## Wave Hill

**Best for ages** 6 and up **It's great because**

It's a hidden treasure! Tap your artistic side at this NYC sanctuary. Each weekend, the 28-acre public garden and cultural site features a different family art project. Explore the gardens and make nature-inspired creations in a class held each Saturday and Sunday, 1–4 p.m. If art's not your thing, there are nature walks, cooking demos, and tai chi chuan classes.

**Remember to** Bring money for the gift shop's nature-inspired jewelry, books, and toys. There's also the Wave Hill Café, for casual dining on the terrace across from the Palisades.

**Bonus** On July 25 and Aug. 1, 8, and 15, 11 a.m.–noon, musicians play in the gardens while the audience reacts with crayons and paper; art materials are provided. And it's free!

**Do it** Free all day Tues., and 9 a.m.–noon Sat.; \$2 ages 6 and up; \$6 adults; 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Tues., Thurs., Fri.–Sun.; 9 a.m.–9 p.m. Wed.; 675 W. 252 St.; Bronx; 718-549-3200; wavehill.org.

### DJ FAMILY DANCE PARTIES

**Best for ages** 3–12 **It's great because**

You can show off your best dance moves in White Plains' public parks; and with songs by folks like The Village People and KC and the Sunshine Band, who could resist? **Remember to** Bring snacks to munch on and lawn chairs and blankets to sit on until you're ready to “get down on it.” **Bonus** Your kids will dig the giveaways (leis, blow-up guitars, cowboy hats), and they'll be downright pooped by bedtime. **Do it** Free; 7–8:30 p.m.; Mattison Park, July 30; George Washington School, July 31; Kitrell Park, Aug. 1; Gardelia Park, Aug. 2; Gillie Park, Aug. 6; Druss Park, Aug. 7; Turnure Park, Aug. 8; Battle Hill Park, Aug. 9; White Plains; 422-1336; cityofwhiteplains.com.

Check it out!



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