

Fall 2012

PRICELESS

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Inside:

**Goodbye City,
Hello Cornfield!**

**CK's Most Adorable
Munchkins Photo
Contest is BACK
...with a twist!**

Inside: Your Guide to Local Family Events in C-K this Fall!



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Welcome to the 2012 Fall Issue of CK Child!

{Fall 2012} CK Child • pg.3

CK Child is a hip, local parenting magazine for those raising their children in Chatham-Kent. Our goal is to unite our community by offering various viewpoints on topics relating to all stages of parenthood.

CK Child also highlights the many, valuable locally run businesses in our region & lists local, family-friendly events occurring in C-K.

Letter from the Editor



We'll here we go again! Another school year has begun. The kids are ready to go for a new year with their new back-to-school gear and are pumped to be starting a brand new grade.

It's hard to believe that my daughter, Chloe, is starting Grade 2! It seems like time is going by even faster now that she's in school. I'm trying hard to hold on to every moment with her that I can because before I know it, we'll be making plans for her to go away to college.

My advice to you is to make the most of this year & enjoy the age they are now. Encourage them to grow but don't push them to grow up too fast! This time is precious and you only get to enjoy them like this for a short period of time. Spend as much quality time together as you can. Connect as a family as much as possible. Create a ton of wonderful memories that your kids can look back on and smile about!

Warmly,

Tammy

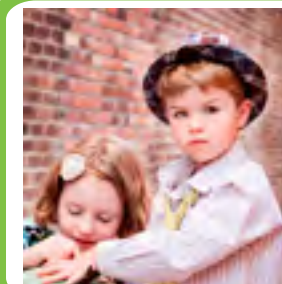
*Tammy Chouinard
Editor/Publisher*



CK Child shows our commitment to the environment by using a FSC certified printer

The cover of this issue of CK Child was done by Julie of Julie Rhodes Photography in beautiful, historic Downtown Chatham.

Our models are
Julia and Coulter.



Julie Rhodes has turned her passion into a successful full time career. She creates a fun & relaxed environment both in her studio or out on location. Her photojournalistic style will capture your authentic connections. Capturing "who" you are not only "what" you look like. She has the ability to connect with her clients & take their memories to create artwork for their walls. Her studio is open by is located in the beautiful historic downtown Chatham.
www.julierhodesphotography.com

Table of Contents

4&5 Welcome to our fabulous & newest writer, Karen Green!
Goodbye City, Hello Cornfield!

6 PURE Perspective

8&9 Regular contributor Elizabeth Sunnen writes her latest
Does Coffee Come in Bucket Size?

10 CK's Most Adorable Munchkins is Back
...with a twist!

12&13 Unveil Your Child's Musical Potential

13 What to Do, What to Do {Sept}

14 What to Do, What to Do {Oct & Nov}

Please Note: Articles within CK Child Parenting Magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor.

CK Child is an independent publication created by a parent for the parent and caregivers of Chatham-Kent.



Please recycle your copy of CK Child.

° www.ckchild.ca ° 519.359.6383 ° ckchildmag@gmail.com °

Goodbye City, Hello Cornfield!



We had talked about it for years, usually in no more than wistful longings during only the most peaceful moments. We should just move out here. Being here is always so relaxing. Life here is just simpler.

Leave Toronto. Move to Chatham. Could we actually do it? Should we do it?

Our visits back to my husband's hometown were always enjoyable, but how could they not be? We returned time and again to the generosity of my in-laws' hospitality, to the enthusiasm of old friends that we didn't see often enough, and to a place where, if only for a weekend, we could leave much of real life in Toronto, behind.

We romanticized our rural sojourns, but at some point along the three-hour drive home on the 401 eastbound, the fantasy would dissolve into doubts, which we called, Just Being Realistic. Besides, how could I ever possibly leave the city I loved and grew up in, and my family within it? By Monday morning, in the rush of trying to get four different people out the door and to four different places, our relaxing weekend in the country could hardly be recalled.

And then, in spring of 2011, something about our conversations changed.

Life in Toronto had become so stressful that my marriage, my career and my happiness seemed to be hanging in the balance. Changes in my long-held place of business were leaving me feel defeated and cheated by the end of the long day. Our dual six-figure income seemed to barely keep us afloat despite a modest home and expenses, and I felt like my two girls, now aged four and seven, were dancing through childhood without me. My unhappiness left me feeling desperate to make a change. Our conversations about moving to the country returned, but now, instead of ending with, We can't do it, we would end those talks with, Why? Why can't we do it? So we did it.

In June of last year, while tagging along on a house-hunting mission with my husband's brother and his wife, we walked into a mid-century rancher on a ¼-acre lot, with a stone fireplace and glowing sunroom. It was a good thing that my brother-in-law didn't think the house was right for them. Telling nobody, we put in an offer.

We got the house. I quit the job I had held as a copywriter with the same company for more than eleven years, my husband negotiated a new expectation with his employer (he is a television producer who mainly works from home anyway), and we jumped, headfirst into a new life in Chatham.

Moving from Toronto to Chatham was a huge risk for us, but one year later, we know that it was worth it.

Cost of living has decreased drastically for us, which means that we can rely mainly on my husband's salary while I am able to spend my time doing the things I had longed for. I am now choosing only the writing jobs I am compelled enough to take, while finally - finally - working on the novel I had waited years to begin.

And I get to be with my kids.

For the first time since I was on maternity leave, I see their faces in the hours between 7am and 5pm. I get to pick my daughter up from school. I get to volunteer for field trips without mentally calculating how many vacation days I will have left afterwards. I get to sign them up for gymnastics that take place at 4 o'clock on a Tuesday afternoon.

I can grocery shop on a Wednesday morning.

Yes, I have a much larger house and yard than I could ever afford in Toronto, but that was never the goal. It's a nice perk. And there are other nice perks to living in Chatham, that I sometimes wonder if anybody else here ever notices, never spending more than 10 minutes travelling anywhere in town, and never having to look for parking, and eating the cheapest, most delicious local produce I have ever had.

My friends in Toronto always ask if I'm bored yet, but we haven't had time to be bored. Our first year here has flown by, as we re-establish bonds with old friends and make new ones. There are local attractions that we haven't even gotten to see yet, and if you want it, a rural fair or festival almost every weekend throughout the summer. The brand new movie theatre is within walking distance for us, and as movies in Chatham are roughly 50% cheaper than those in Toronto, we have availed ourselves of it regularly. I love strolling the downtown with my girls in tow, stopping in at our favourite stores and watching exciting building projects progress. There are changes here to look forward to, and I enjoy being a part of them.

Having my children grow up with my husband's family has been a gift. Grandparents are always at the ready for an afternoon with their grandchildren, aunts and uncles are regular cheerleaders at soccer games and gymnastics practices, and my husband and I have had more date nights this year than we know what to do with, thanks to the involvement of cherished brothers- and sisters-in-law. And my family now gets to ride the train from Toronto to enjoy their weekends in the country, romanticizing their time here as we once did.

Of course, life in Chatham this past year has also had its challenges. It's been harder for me to make friends here than I expected it to be – proximity of space or of children the same age is enough of a common denominator in Toronto to allow strangers to chat. Here, I am very aware of my 'newness,' and the fact that I have no shared history with the very established groups of friends that already exist.

by Karen Green

And I do worry about raising kids in our small town. I love the bubble of home and family and these very early, very innocent years with my children here, but my children are from a mixed-ethnic background, and I worry about the lack of cultural diversity here. Happily, the schoolyard has proven to be a bit more diverse than I had been expecting, and I hope that in the coming years we welcome more and more newcomers to Chatham.

I also worry that a lack of cultural events and a lack of enthusiasm towards building Chatham's social and cultural capital will hamper the dynamic life I want my children to live.

But there are plenty of things to do here with kids; they are just different things. We are trading an afternoon in Chinatown for an afternoon at the stables. We are trading walks on The Danforth for walks in the Carolinian forest. My kids will know how to ride a horse before they know how to ride a subway. It's different. We traded Canada's biggest city for Canada's biggest cornfield. But it's ok.

And then, in the midst of a pang of doubt or a worry that we may have made a mistake, I find myself at home at the noon-hour, preparing grilled cheese sandwiches for my four-year-old and me. And while I butter bread and heat pans, she sits on a stool near me, and sings. Her song is epic, unpredictable, a universe-spanning tale of a cow and the alien who loves her. And I look over at my happy child, and she smiles,

but her song doesn't end. And I think, It's worth it.

Karen Green recently moved with her family to Chatham from Toronto. Freed from her full-time job as a writer and editor, Karen now spends her time... writing and editing. And frolicking in the leaves with her two small girls. Karen is a speaker, the parenting columnist at CanadianFamily.ca, the founder of the nationally-recognized political movement, Mom The Vote and the author of the blog, The Kids Are Alright, where she has been writing about the humorous and poignant moments of family life since 2005.



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PURE Perspective



Pure's owners have invested in a vision and continue to invest in that vision to better the Pure experience. They are a group of infinite passion and have created an artistic environment that greatly benefits their community. It is always exciting and enjoyable to be a part of it all.

My immediate impression of the staff was a positive one. Each individual within the management team contributes a very positive and inspiring form

of support and structure to their staff, and this definitely carries over to their customers. I have never met a group of individuals so different and diverse in their teaching philosophies and qualifications. Each staff member contributes a totally different experience within their respective classroom setting. I have learned so much in my time here just from watching and participating in different classes myself. Not only is Pure a learning experience for the student, but for the staff as well. I take pride in the fact that I am working among such a talented and genuinely kind group of people.

Pure provides a state of the art facility for its recreational, competitive and performing arts students and dancers. And it's within these walls that Pure's excellent programming takes place in a wide variety of class types. However, beyond the programming itself, I was also impressed with the secondary accommodations that are made available to students and parents. The lounge at the front of the studio offers comfortable couches and seating arrangements that many parents take advantage of when waiting for their child. Also, the glass paneling of the studio rooms and the video cameras liven the waiting experience. It is a very comfortable environment and I have yet to see anything else like it.

Each student at Pure is given access to not only a very unique and exciting learning experience, but also a very unique out of class experience. The student lounge sets Pure apart from other studios. Open access to a room with tables, chairs, couches, lockers and even a microwave, gives the student a place to relax in between classes and socialize with friends. It is refreshing to see a space that is exclusive to the students and gives them

a sense of belonging.

I have never encountered a management/staff team that is as hard working and dedicated to their dancers and classrooms. Pure offers a creative and innovative atmosphere that is continually improving and changing each year as it strives to meet their community and customer needs. I have enjoyed my first year of working at Pure immensely, and after learning the ins and outs of the studio, I am proud to say I am part of the Pure team, as well as making a Pure difference.

Melissa is an instructor at PURE Academy and is commencing her second year. She has received various awards for her choreography and competitive pieces and has enjoyed travelling across North America, taking classes from professionals in the industry. has danced and choreographed for several local artists and shows around Windsor and the Essex county region.

Designs by Heather

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Check out our designs on the cover of this issue of CK Child!



Riki-Lee

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'Not your everyday cookie cutter clothing!'

Does Coffee Come in Bucket Size?



When I dropped my kids off at school and daycare yesterday, there was an unmistakable odour in the air. It wasn't the smell of mimosas and happiness (which is a valid possibility on the first week of a new school year); no it was much less celebratory than that. I wondered why someone had allowed a dog to poop in the backseat.

Well, it was somewhere in the car anyway-- I didn't see any feces in the back, all of our back-to-school shoes were clean, yet my car stunk of warm dog excrement.

The thing is that even if there was a full-on Great Dane living in the backseat of my Honda CR-V, we'd never know it for the garbage dump that is the kids' seats. The best way to describe my backseat would be an aquarium (via millions of goldfish crackers) in Chernobyl; by "best" I mean "nicest."

Husband, being kind and wonderful and generous and possibly insane, offered to clean the car out today. Well, it actually went down like this:

Me: I don't wanna run today. I'm gonna take the kids to Amsterdam and we'll go swimming at Grandma and Grandpa's instead and I'll get my run in that way.

Husband: You can't drive your car to Amsterdam.

Me: Eh? Why not?

Husband: Because it smells like dog crap. You'll asphyxiate with the windows up on the highway.

Me: Oh. Oh yeah.

Husband: Plus you need to clean out your car today.

Me: Well, anyway, those are the same problems.

Husband: Right, so how are you gonna clean your car from the pool?

Me: Well, I was just gonna drive it in with the windows down.

Husband: Can't make it any worse.

Me: So, problems are solved. Can you help me pack the kids up?

Husband: No and yes.

We fed and watered the children (it was noon) and got them almost ready to leave when Husband reappeared and said, "I can't, in good conscience, allow the children or myself to be transported to your parents' house in your car."

Seriously-- the DRAMA in this man.

I looked at him, sighed a big sigh and said, "Well then, I guess we'll just clean out my car at my parents' house because the kids are already excited to go."

Husband repeated his DRAMA about good consciences and how we'd all die if we drove the hour and a half to my parent's abode. Oh, "Amsterdam" is what I call the little town my parents live in (Amherstburg) because it's an hour and a half from Chatham and it feels like you need a passport and an international flight to get there. It's cute and all, but dang! The drive is long.

Right. Drama. So I said, "Well, I suppose I could take your truck with the children and YOU can clean my car out from the comfort of your own home."

Down the highway I tooted-- well not really tooted-- Husband drives a truck, and trucks don't Toot, they Shart. Off I sharted,

down the highway to Amsterdam and a pool and cardio via lap swimming while my children splash around with my parents and my husband cleans my car. The kids and I made a nice little trip of it, stopping at a cute bookstore and picking up a bunch of random produce at three different fruit/veggie stands along the way. The produce was a little on the lean side, unless I wanted to get 500 pumpkins, that is.

Around 8pm I got a text from Husband.

"Somewhere on this earth, a Japanese man is openly weeping for what has been done to this car."

I told him that he's hilarious but that my car was made in North America so probably the factory workers in Japan don't give a care what I do to the car, and thanks for cleaning it out. He replied "The hardest part was getting the raccoon family to leave." I said "Haha." Then he said, "I managed to only get a fine from MoE." "Who's Moe?" I asked, knowing none of our neighbours are named Moe. "Ministry of the Environment. They showed up with Hazmat suits when I opened up the back hatch."

This is what I have to live with.

I returned home. Sure, the inside of the car is spotless and (I checked) smelling good, but the outside is still dirty and the windows are still smeary. Boo.

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Home raised for companions or show!

by Elizabeth Sunnen

I called to Hubby who groaned and said, "I can't help you bring Kiddo #2 in-- I'm sore and exhausted."

Me: You played soccer on Tuesday. It's Sunday.

Hubby: It's from cleaning your car.

Me: (silence-- mostly because I have no idea how to convey the emotions I'm feeling right now.)

Hubby: I didn't even get to wash it.

Me: I noticed that. It's gross on the outside now.

Hubby: Well, I cleaned your car for 6 hours today.

In the Choose Your Own Adventure version of this conversation, the reply would look like this:

Turn to page 68 if you said, "You spent 6 hours cleaning my car? No wonder your morning shower takes so long."

Skip to page 3 if you said, "Wow. That's a testament to the filth. I'm sorry honey. I'll never do that again, probably, once the kids have moved out."

Hop over to page 5 if you looked at the wall and thought nasty and then nice thoughts and then a little bit nasty thoughts again. Not nasty like 50 Shades, but nasty like Dexter.

If you cheated while reading the Choose Your Own Adventure books and always looked at the three options to make sure the one you picked wasn't the Stop sign/End point and re-chose when it was, then you'll want to know which one was the 'right' choice.

Ha. Yes, you would, Cheater. Yes, you would.

Elizabeth is a teacher & writer who takes motherhood one laugh at a time. She grew up in C-K & s thrilled to be back in such a great community. Check out her blog: www.DoesCoffeeComeInBucketSize.blogspot.com

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Chatham-Kent Children's Chorus

CK's Most Adorable Munchkins Photo Contest

is BACK...with a twist!



It's back! Parents in the local area of Chatham-Kent will be invited, once again, to send us photos of their Adorable Munchkins! But this time we're doing things a little bit differently...

What's different you ask? Well, we are not asking you to send in just any ole photo of your sweet little munchkins. We want you to polish up those cameras and get snapping because the winning photo will be the actual one used **on the cover of our 2013 Spring issue of CK Child!**

So we want all you Moms and Dads to get your creative thinking caps on and set up your own photo shoot to create a unique and fabulous shot for our upcoming Spring issue of CK Child. It must represent the Spring season and be a current shot of your children (0-12 yrs of age). We will have our own judging panel including Julie Rhodes of Julie Rhodes Photography and Tammy Chouinard of CK Child who will decide which entry will be the winning photo. Judging will be based on things like creativity, 'Spring' feel, use of local resources and, of course, the way that you express and capture the personality and faces of your 'adorable munchkin'.

This contest officially begins October 8th, 2012 so start thinking about what you think would be the perfect Spring cover for CK Child and express your creative flair with this amateur photography contest.

We will outline all the details on our blog www.ckmostadorablemunchkins.blogspot.ca and, of course, on our **Facebook** group!

Stay tuned for more details...



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CKRecreation

Unveil Your Child's Musical Potential

When I was a child, a well-meaning relative told my parents that I was tone deaf.

In retrospect, that's a funny story—not only am I not tone-deaf, I am a career musician after two decades of intense and ongoing study.

Here's my point: right now, your child has unlimited, untapped musical potential.

Hard to believe? It's true! They may sing out-of-tune, they might not be able to keep a beat, but trust me—they have musical greatness in them, and if they're inclined to explore it, you'll need to help them along.

The next step is determining how to find music lessons for your child that will foster genuine development of their musical abilities. How far your child will go and how much your child will achieve is directly related to the quality of the training you find for him or her.

I can tell you now that not all the options you have before you are going to be beneficial or particularly educational, but all is not lost - there are some truly gifted music educators in Chatham-Kent.

So what should you be thinking about when you start looking for music lessons? Here are four points to always keep in mind:

Qualifications and Experience do mean something. While it's not the only factor, the qualifications and experience of your potential instructor are often a good indication of their level of knowledge and ability as a music educator. Do they continue to study to improve their craft? Are they familiar with current trends in music education? Have they achieved some measurable level of training in their own right? Don't be afraid to ask questions!

I Love a Piano
I know technology is great, but I'm a purist. In my opinion, it's almost impossible to have a high-quality music lesson without the use of musical instruments—CDs are great, but they are no substitute for live musical accompaniment. Get your child involved and interested in how live music is created – they'll be fascinated.

Variety is the Spice of Life
Look for lessons that will expose your child to new things: new cultures, new instruments, new languages—the more variety they have, the better. Should your child get to sing or play pop music? Absolutely! But that shouldn't be all your child does!

by Rachel Schwarz Whittall

Money isn't everything

Don't just immediately go to the most expensive thing and assume that you're getting the best. Talk to the instructor and use your instincts. While private lessons can get pricy, a high quality choral program or youth orchestra is an amazing way to introduce your child to lessons without breaking the bank.

I know, it's a lot to think about, but here's the great thing: you can get all these things right here in Chatham-Kent! I grew up in C-K, and I was fortunate enough to have been a part of an amazing children's choir. My director, the late Janet Wake, was an inspiration to me, and is a major part of the reason I decided to become a musician. It's with her in mind that I begin the inaugural season of the Chatham-Kent Children's Chorus.

Chatham-Kent has a remarkable tradition of musical excellence. I received top-notch training here, and it's my pleasure to now offer everything that I've learned to the next generation of bright, young C-K musicians.

What to Do, What to Do

CKChild

{Sept 2012}

Sept 14-16	-	Grand Ole Power Days	Sydenham Antique Club (Florence)
Sept 15	10:00am	Canadian Cancer Society Bike Ride	Performance Fitness (Chatham)
Sept 27	7:00pm	Meet the Author: Sharon Lehnert	Chatham Public Library
Sept 28	6-8pm	Boob Camp (for Breast Cancer)	Blair Brother Fitness (Chatham)
Sept 29	9-5pm	Red Cross Babysitting Course	Ridgetown Youth Centre
Sept 29	9-12pm	Give the Gift of Life Walk	Mud Creek Park (Chatham)
Sept 30	10:00am	2nd Annual United Way C-K Harvest Run	John McGregor Secondary School

Happy Thanksgiving from

CKChild

{Oct 2012}

Oct 6	8-3pm	Fall Craft Show & Bake Sale	Blenheim Family Cafe
Oct 19-21	-	New Home & Reno Expo 2012 for your Heart	St. Clair College Health Plex
Oct 20	9-2pm	Elvis - The Moments ft. Pete Paquette	Kiwanis Theatre
Oct 20	11-1pm	Jesse's Memorial Walk for Children's Safety 2012	UCC
Oct 20	8:00pm	Dresden Skating Club 3rd Annual Craft Show	Dresden Arena
Oct 27	10:30-2pm	Rubber Stamp and Scrapbooking Garage Sale	St. Clair College



Spooktacular: Down On The Farm
(Hidden Hills Farm - Grande Pointe)

Fri Oct 12, 19 & 26, 4-9:00 pm
Sat Oct 13, 20 & 27, 11-9:00pm
Sun Oct 14, 21 & 28, 11-6:00pm



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What to Do, What to Do

CKChild

{November 2012}

Nov 3	-	4th Annual Kakoon Blues Concert	Kakoon Spa (Ridgetown)
Nov 5	8pm	Flavour & Favours	Portugese Canadian Social Club
Nov 8	8pm	Chantal Kreviazuk with Orchestra London	Capitol Theatre
Nov 8,9,10,16,17	8pm	White Christmas	Kiwanis Theatre
Nov 9	6pm	Imagination Movers	Capitol Theatre
Nov 10	5:30pm	2nd Annual 'Imagine, Believe, Achieve' Gala	Armouries
Nov 11	-	Remembrance Day	-
Nov 16	7pm	Windsor Symphony Orchestra	Mary Webb Centre
Nov 16	6:30-8pm	Chatham Santa Claus Parade	Downtown Chatham
Nov 17	10-2pm	IODE Christmas Crafts and Food	St. Michael School (Ridgetown)
Nov 17	9-5pm	Red Cross Babysitting Course	Thames Campus Arena
Nov 26	9-5pm	Red Cross Babysitting Course	Dresden Arena

Please Note: We list as many events that cater to family & parents as possible & confirm details as best we can. However, it may occur from time to time that an event may change so we always recommend confirming details before making plans. For details, visit www.ckchild.ca. If you know of an upcoming event you would like us to list, please email us at: ckchildmag@gmail.com



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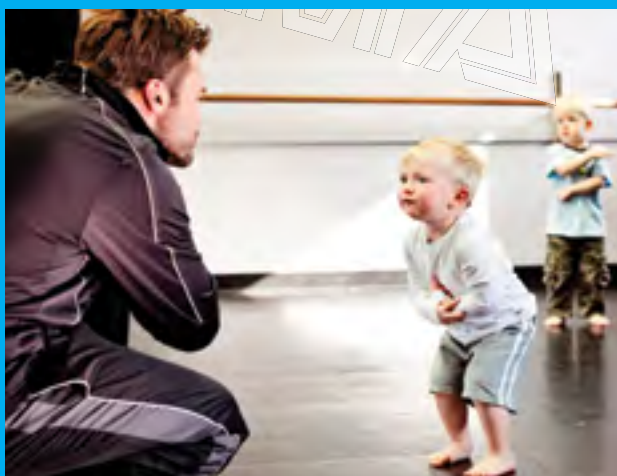
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