

Washington FAMILY

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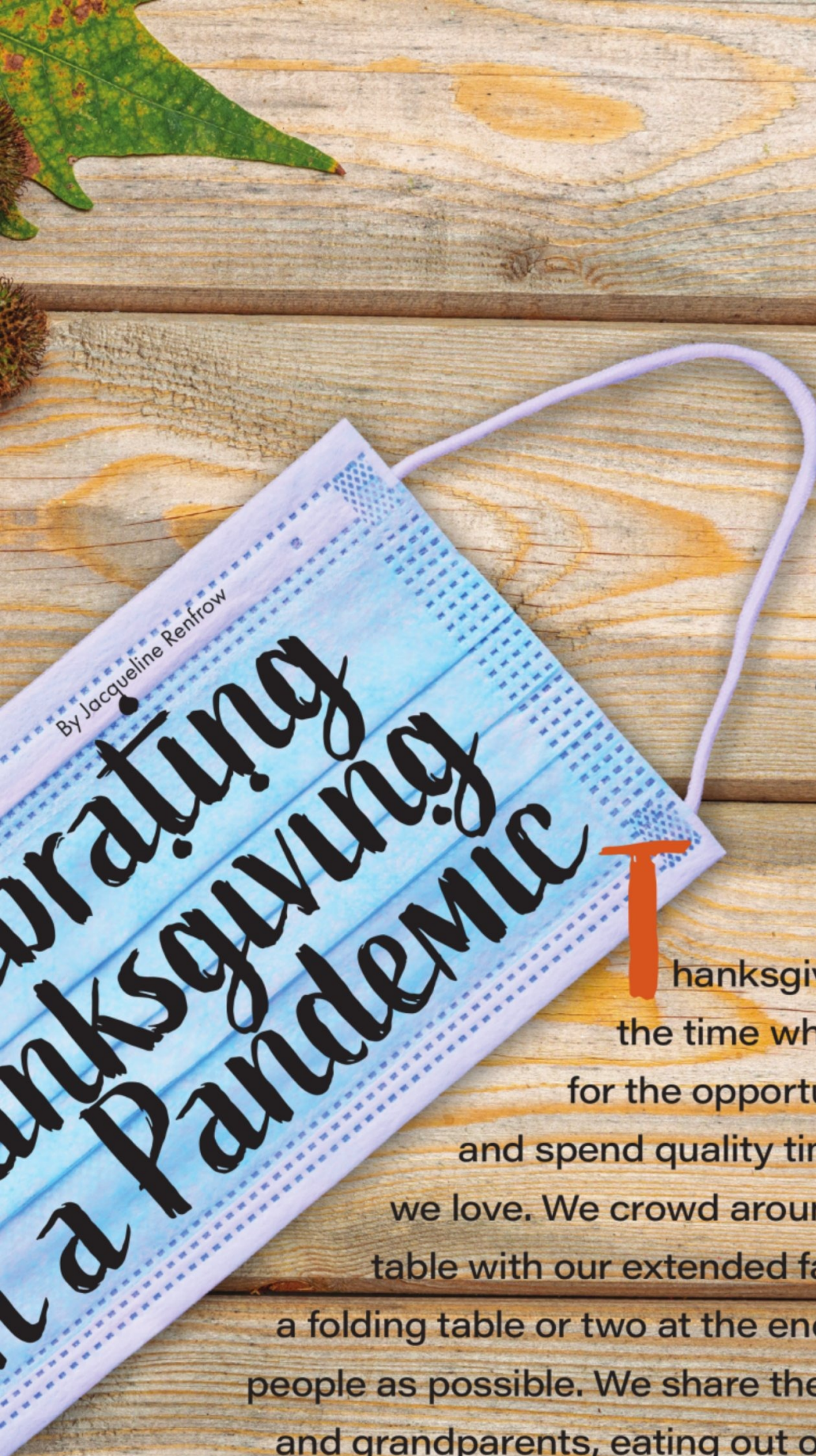
*Make New
Thanksgiving Traditions*

**Getting
Kids
Excited
About
Giving Back**

**Meet Corinne Cannon
of the Greater DC Diaper Bank**







By Jacqueline Renfrow

**Celebrating
Thanksgiving
in a Pandemic**

What can you do to ensure a safe and festive holiday?

Thanksgiving is traditionally the time when we give thanks for the opportunity to slow down and spend quality time with the people we love. We crowd around the dining room table with our extended family, often adding a folding table or two at the ends to seat as many people as possible. We share the sofa with cousins and grandparents, eating out of the same bowl of chips and dip while watching the football game.



This year, though, COVID-19 may preclude long-distance traveling and large gatherings under one roof. As the public health crisis continues, many families are left wondering how to celebrate Thanksgiving in a pandemic.

With this difficult decision to make comes a great deal of stress, says Dr. Julie Bindeman, co-director of Integrative Therapy of Greater Washington in Rockville, Maryland. She notes that many adults are feeling the pressure to have a “normal” holiday in their currently abnormal lives.

“Parents [are] trying to understand what the potential risks actually are, as information disseminated can be confusing and contradictory,” Bindeman says. “People are concerned that when flu season is in its peak, with COVID continuing to be a threat, that this might be one of their last opportunities to see older family members [before winter].”

Communication is key

How you choose to spend your Thanksgiving will be based on your family’s comfort levels, so communication is key. Bindeman

recommends thinking about the following questions: What are your expectations from a potential trip or having visitors? What are people’s COVID boundaries? What is considered acceptable risk for each family group that might be coming together?

To help families start a discussion about COVID risks, Bindeman recommends the Quaranteam Calculator (absolutesh.com/calculator) online.

“Since everyone’s risk tolerance and approach are different, it’s best to discuss these protocols and rules of engagement

early on. Guests can decide for themselves whether they are OK with them or not,” says Vicky Choy, CEO of Event Accomplished, based in Arlington, Virginia. Perhaps everyone will agree to quarantine for two weeks prior to Thanksgiving or to take a COVID test before getting together.

If you decide to celebrate with extended family, Choy recommends keeping the guest count small and hosting outdoors when possible. In addition, think about how you can serve food and beverages to minimize touching the same utensils. Pre-plated options is a better idea than a buffet; individual servings, such as miniature pies, are a good option, too. Choy also recommends seating guests from the same household together and keeping the event short.

However, don’t be afraid to opt out of a family gathering all together. “That is a legitimate choice to make with the virus in the background,” says Bindeman.

Create new holiday traditions

Parents can still find many ways to ensure that a smaller-scale Thanksgiving is not only festive and memorable, but also safe.

“There are so many fun activities you can do with children,” says Zozzie Golden, senior



FUN THANKSGIVING DAY ACTIVITIES

Here are five more family-friendly Thanksgiving activities with the potential to become annual traditions, courtesy of Zozzie Golden of Innovative Party Planners:

PUMPKIN TOSS It’s cornhole, with a twist. See who can get their pumpkin closest to the target.

SWEET POTATO RACE Instead of egg on a spoon, create a relay race using Thanksgiving sweet potatoes.

BASTER CHALLENGE See who can get a feather to dance across the floor and over the finish line first by using only a turkey baster.

TREASURE HUNT Purchase some inexpensive Thanksgiving-themed objects and hide them around your home. Or conduct an outdoor photo scavenger hunt for fall treasures, such as acorns, leaves, squirrels and birds.

ARTS AND CRAFTS Draw or paint a turkey and decorate it with colorful feathers or other small items.



Turkey Trots

Go Virtual for Thanksgiving 2020



By WF Staff

designer at Innovative Party Planners in Owings Mills, Maryland. Over the summer, when camp was canceled, Golden created a Color War competition for her grandchildren. Similarly, parents and kids could compete in Thanksgiving challenges or activities for prizes, such as chocolate turkeys, lollipops and holiday candies—or even trophies.

While parents are making Thanksgiving inventive, Heidi Hiller, owner of Innovative Party Planners, notes that the pandemic and travel bans could be especially stressful on older generations who are frustrated with their inability or inexperience to video chat. She recommends thinking about other ways to connect with these family members.

“This might mean having your kids draw pictures, write their relatives letters or send them family photos and share what everyone has been up to,” says Hiller. You may also want to mail homemade decorations in advance of Thanksgiving that loved ones can use as centerpieces on their holiday table.

Hiller and Golden are becoming experts in the art of celebrations in the time of COVID and are constantly seeking creative ways for clients to come together. For example, you could plan a series of short video visits throughout the holiday weekend or decide to watch the Thanksgiving parades in your pajamas with everyone on Zoom. You may also want to consider meeting virtually for Saturday game night, Sunday brunch or to shop online deals for the upcoming holiday season.

And remember: “Children like structure,” says Bindeman, “so letting them know in advance what the plan is can be very helpful.” Empower your kids by asking them what they find meaningful about Thanksgiving, and implementing some of their suggestions.

The pandemic may be forcing us to reassess how we celebrate traditional holidays such as Thanksgiving, but perhaps this reassessment isn’t a bad thing. “Distill it down to the why and think about how to retain the why in a different way,” says Choy. “Is it really about the turkey and leftovers or is it about coming together as a family?” ■

You may not be able to run alongside hundreds of people this Thanksgiving, but you and your family can still lace up your sneakers and participate in a local turkey trot. Because of COVID-19, many of these 5K, 10K and 1-mile fun runs and walks are happening virtually, with most taking place over the span of several days. Here are five virtual turkey trots you can join this month that benefit D.C.-area organizations.

Arlington Turkey Trot 15th Annual 5K Fun Run

Hit the pavement any time between Wednesday, Nov. 25, and Tuesday, Dec. 1, on the official Turkey Trot course or another certified 5K course of your choosing. The race might be virtual, but the official T-shirt and bib are available IRL with registration—\$40 for adults, \$20 for children ages 6-17. All net proceeds are donated to six local charities. arlingtonvatourkeytrot.org

19th Annual Thanksgiving Trot for Hunger 5K

You don’t need to be in D.C. to take part in this community event benefiting SOME (So Others Might Eat) and its work to provide much-needed food, housing, health care and more to thousands of District neighbors in need. Register as an individual (\$15-\$45), create a virtual team or join an existing team. support.some.org

Prince William Turkey Trot 5K and Mashed Potato Mile

Download your racing bib and run this annual race on a treadmill, in a park or around your neighborhood anytime through Nov. 29. When the event is over, each participant will receive an official Prince William Turkey Trot medal. Registration is \$28 for the 5K, 10K and half marathon, and \$12.50 for the Mashed Potato Mile. A portion of each registration will be donated to one of several community nonprofits. princewilliamturkeytrot.com

18th Annual Vienna Turkey Trot

Plot your own course for this year’s virtual Vienna Turkey Trot, benefiting the James Madison High School Band and the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department. The event is taking place Nov. 24-28, but if you sign up early, you’re guaranteed a special edition VTT knit beanie to wear on your walk or run. Registration for the 5K, 10K and 1-mile dog walk is \$25 per person. viennaturkeytrot.org

38th Annual Turkey Chase Charity Race

A Thanksgiving tradition since 1982, the Turkey Chase is the largest fundraiser for the YMCA Bethesda-Chevy Chase and the B-CC Rotary Club. Show your support for these community organizations by walking, running, biking or swimming any time between Nov. 16 and 30. Registration for each of the virtual events is \$48. turkeychase.com

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