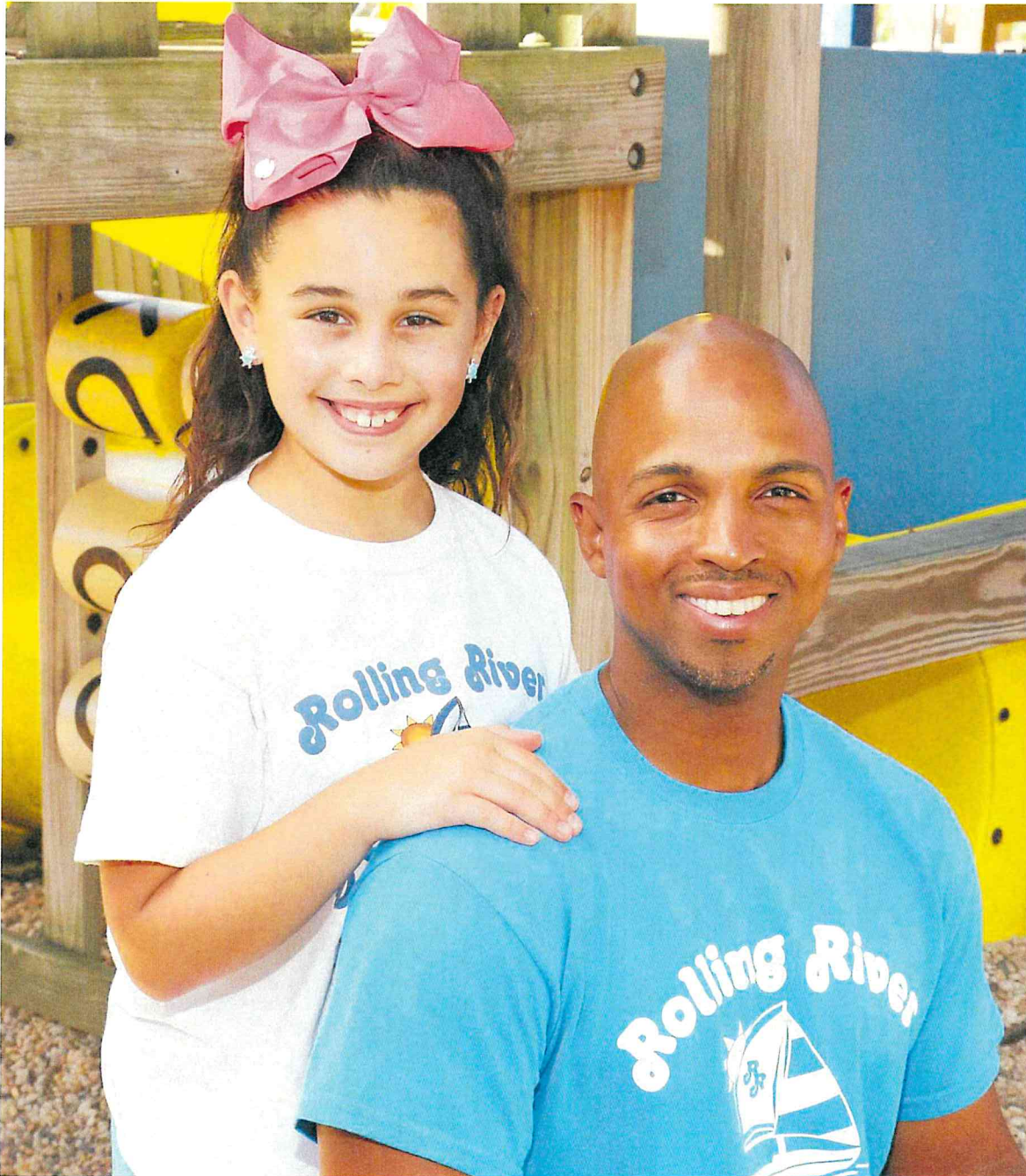




Scrambling to plan kids'



Because Jaison Coles works at Rolling River Day Camp in East Rockaway, his daughter Isabella, 10, attends for free.

Time to schedule camps, day trips, baby-sitters . . .

BY BETH WHITEHOUSE

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Summer vacation will be here before we know it, so parents are doing their homework now to map out the logistics of filling their kids' days.

Call it the Summer Scramble.

"We are in the midst of the scramble right now, trying to figure out what to do," says Nicole Hollingsworth, 42, of Freeport, a part-time real estate agent and co-owner of a laundromat who has five children ranging from 7 to 19 years old.

"My husband and I both work full-time," says Whitnee Skobla, 32, of South Hempstead, who works in marketing in Manhattan. "Camps around here are insanely expensive. There really is no affordable option that helps working people." She says she is choosing weeklong, half-day sports and science programs for her son, River, 5, and interviewing college students who would pick him up and entertain him during the rest of the day. "I've kind of just been mapping this all out to see if the dates work and the times work," she says.

Tracy Newton, 43, of Rockville Centre, who works for Brooklyn College, calls the Summer Scramble "extremely stressful." Says Newton: "I've pieced the entire summer together by the second week in April. You're planning very far in advance and you're hoping everything works and that they like it."

DAD GOES TO CAMP, TOO

A convenient route to keeping the kids entertained is to send them to a day camp that provides busing and before-

IRVIN SIMON PHOTOGRAPHERS

summer activities

and after-care options. But that's also among the most expensive options, which not every family can afford.

So to enable Isabella Coles, 10, of Long Beach to go to camp for eight weeks, her dad, Jaison Coles, goes to camp as well. Coles, 34, is a teacher's assistant at William S. Covert Elementary School in South Hempstead and his wife, Helena Mesquita-Coles, is an office associate for a medical practice. During the summer, Coles works at Rolling River Day Camp in East Rockaway as a head counselor for third-grade boys and as a bus driver. Coles says he sacrifices some pay so that Isabella can attend eight weeks of camp free. This will be her sixth summer there.

"It's a great trade-off for me," Coles says. "I'm a big kid myself, and I love working with the youth."

Many camps offer such an arrangement. "It's really a win-win because we get to hire adult staff who are responsible and experienced," says Marissa Allaben, co-director of Rolling River. She says about 60 percent of her staff have children attending the camp.

If a full-time, full-day camp isn't in the cards, some parents, like Skobla, turn to weeklong options that they piece together like a puzzle. Her son will go to a one-week Ultimate Games Camp that runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rockville Centre Recreation Center, for instance, and she posted on a Rockville Centre moms' group Facebook page looking for college student baby-sitters, especially ones who are athletes. "I feel like they'd be more active," she says, keeping her high-energy son busy.



Check out Newsday's camp finder at newsday.com/summercamps



Whitnee Skobla is piecing together sports and science programs along with baby-sitters for her son, River, 5.

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'SUMMER FIELD TRIPS'

Newton says she strategically places her family's vacation in the middle of July, so that fills some time. She has Fridays off in the summer, so one thing she does is send her son, Ethan,

7, to a program at Sportime in Lynbrook, which allows parents to buy bundles of days instead of paying by the week. A bundle of one to 11 days for ages 7 to 13, for instance, costs \$115 per day, says Fiorella Labiento, Sportime's general manager. Camp runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with optional before-camp care starting at 8 a.m. and after-care continuing to 6 p.m.

Jennifer Scully, 46, an interior designer from Dix Hills, says she can set her schedule and pick and choose which days she

spends with her daughter. "We don't need coverage every day," she says. So she sends Lola, 13, to a program with the Reach Community and Youth Agency, a non-profit funded primarily by the Town of Huntington that serves the Commack and Half Hollow Hills school districts. She can select which days to send Lola — 2019 choices include, for instance, \$35 for a charterboat fishing trip at Captree State Park, \$58 for the Adventure Park in Wheatley Heights, or \$72 for a trip to Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum and Planet Hollywood in Manhattan. Scully drops Lola off and picks her up in Commack.

"You could almost look at them like summer field trips," says Roseann Miceli, executive director of Reach CYA. "People can pick and choose which trips they'd like ... depending on the interests of their children." Sign-ups start May 4 at reachcya.org.

Other towns and school districts offer options as well. During three weeks in July, Delaney Hollingsworth, 9, attends the Freeport School District's free Summer Academy of the Arts, which runs from 8 a.m. to noon at a district school and serves 300 fourth- through eighth-graders. Two of her older siblings, Elijah, 16, and Myles, 14, who had attended the program, now mentor the younger kids there. After camp, the Hollingsworths depend on friends and family members for care. They've also joined the Freeport Recreation Center as a family, so Elijah and Myles can be dropped off there and enjoy time in the afternoons.

"They just flash their card and go in," mom Nicole Hollingsworth says. They can swim, and after the rec center's camps end at 4 p.m., they can use the gym to play basketball.



Is your school's music program great? Apply!

The Long Island Music Hall of Fame is accepting applications for the 2018-2019 School Recognition Program. Winners will be invited to be part of the non-profit's 2019 Holiday Concert at NYCB Theatre at Westbury.

The Music Hall's School Recognition Program is designed to identify Long Island high school music programs that are creating notable music experiences for their students. The ensembles are chosen based on an application submitted by the schools; the deadline for submissions is April 30.

The 2018 Holiday Concert participants were from Great Neck North, Oyster Bay, Herricks, Uniondale and Northport.

The Long Island Music Hall of Fame is a nonprofit dedicated to the idea that Long Island's musical heritage is an important resource to be celebrated and preserved for future generations. The organization has inducted more than 100 musicians and music industry executives, and also offers education programs and scholarships to Long Island students and features traveling educational exhibits, including a mobile museum.

The Recognition Program application is available for download at limusichalloffame.org.

— BETH WHITEHOUSE



The Great Neck North Orchestra plays at the 2018 Holiday Concert.

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