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HELPING INJURED NEW YORKERS

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## Time to Hit the Books

### SCHOOL IS ALMOST BACK IN SESSION

I went to a Catholic elementary school in Brooklyn — St. Vincent Ferrer — and my most vivid memories of the back-to-school season from my childhood involve trips to the uniform store every August. My two older brothers and I would walk about 20 blocks with our mom (we didn't own a car back then) and buy what we needed. My two younger brothers had far fewer of those experiences; by the time they were school-age, we had enough hand-me-down shirts and ties in the house to last a lifetime.

My boys started at Catholic school in Staten Island, but they switched to public when we moved to New Jersey. They'll now tell you they hated uniforms and are thrilled to wear whatever they want to school, but funnily enough, they never had a problem with their clothing at the time. It was easy — you woke up already knowing what you would wear. But now that the boys have this taste of freedom, I'm sure it would be a struggle to go back.

The change between schools might be the hardest for me. I'm still amazed to see they don't get any homework! Back at Our Lady of Good Counsel school, even my youngest had half an hour of homework every night in kindergarten — I thought it was great. Now, they rarely bring anything home except a bit of reading. I find it very strange, and I'm still getting used to it. But naturally, the boys love it!

This fall's most significant transition will be for my middle son, Sean. He'll be entering sixth grade and attending middle school for the



first time. Owen is headed into eighth grade, and both boys are excited to go to school together. Sean feels proud to be getting older, and Owen looks forward to showing his younger brother the ropes. I feel very fortunate that Owen is thoughtful and willing to look out for his younger brother.

Meanwhile, my youngest, Finn, has never been an eager student. He was the only one of the three boys who didn't mind remote learning during the pandemic. Sitting at a computer all day was preferable to him compared to a classroom. He'll happily tell you he has no intention of attending college.

Fortunately, there are plenty of ways for him to be successful without a degree. But I hope Finn will find fourth grade a bit more interesting since it's the year he gets to start playing an instrument. He is considering cello and percussion; I just hope he finds something he's passionate about. Right now, the only part of school that excites him is the bell at the end of the day!

I hope everyone reading this has a safe and happy start to the new school year — especially the teachers who make everything our kids learn possible. Even students like my youngest who don't enjoy the process greatly benefit from all your hard work and dedication. Thank you for everything you do!

## WHAT CLIENTS ARE SAYING

*"Mr. O'Connor and his staff are both knowledgeable and empathetic. Their telephone etiquette and competency are exceptional. In short, they delivered — I highly recommend this law firm!"*

—Sabrina B.

—Brian O'Connor



# HEALTHY FINANCING OR FINANCIAL STRAIN?

## Is a Medical Credit Card Right for You?

Medical expenses have steadily risen over the years, and individuals who have undergone extensive and invasive procedures have felt the cost increase. Even with insurance and payment plans, these expenses can drain your bank account in a few short months. To combat this, many health care providers have started offering medical credit card accounts to help spread the cost over time.

If a doctor, dentist, or medical specialist has recommended a pricey but necessary treatment, they may have offered to open a CareCredit or Synchrony account in your name. As tempting as it might be, you need to educate yourself about the fine print before signing up.

Like everything in life, there are good and bad sides to opening a medical credit card to pay for treatment. The good side of

these charge accounts is relatively apparent, and the benefits coordinator or salesperson who tries to get you to sign up will focus heavily on these positives. If approved, you can put some or all of the medical expenses on the card and pay it off over time. Most of these financing companies will offer 6–18 months of zero interest, so it can be an excellent option for people who can manage their credit and have the funds to pay it off in the allotted time.

The problem with that interest-free period is if you miss or, in some cases, are late on a payment, the interest begins to accrue immediately. That interest is no joke, either! It's often upward of 25%, and once that tacks on, it will feel like you'll never be able to pay off the account.

Another thing to remember is that these credit card companies and some medical



professionals who push them only have their own interests in mind. They don't care if you're already in extreme debt or live off a fixed income. Once you sign that agreement and treatment has been provided, there's no backing out. Take some time to think about the terms of the credit contract and your other options before enrolling in a medical credit card. If you're not in the best financial situation, it may cause more harm than good.

## Lawsuits Every Cancer Patient Should Know About

*IF YOU'RE SICK, YOU COULD BE COMPENSATED!*

In May 2022, a California woman named Deanne Warren won a \$43 million lawsuit. Her argument was simple: She was sick, and the company her husband worked for was to blame.

That might seem like thin reasoning, but there's a long history of patients successfully suing over their illnesses. Deanne won her case because her legal team proved her pleural mesothelioma (a type of lung cancer) could be traced back to her carpenter husband's work. He installed asbestos-filled doors over 40 years ago for Algoma Hardwoods in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Illnesses like cancer often strike at random — but when scientists can tie them back to a cause (like asbestos), there are legal ways to hold the at-fault company or product accountable. Nationwide, millions of Americans have made legal arguments like Deanne's, blaming the people they worked for, the products they used, and even the U.S. government for their cancers. Here are just a few of them.



- **Cancer-Causing Baby Powder** — Johnson & Johnson's talc-based baby powder is allegedly linked to ovarian cancer and mesothelioma. In April 2023, the company agreed to pay over \$8.9 billion to 60,000 people sickened by its products.
- **Potentially Deadly Hair Straighteners** — A 2022 National Institutes of Health study found a correlation between women's use of chemical hair-straightening products and their frequency of uterine cancer. Law firms nationwide are actively taking clients for these cases, and we'll likely see court battles soon.
- **Dangerous Weed Killer** — According to Forbes, the agrochemical company Monsanto (now owned by Bayer) has settled over 100,000 lawsuits worth \$11 billion related to its Roundup weed killer. Victims claim the weed killer causes blood cancers, including non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

If you or someone you know is struggling with one of these cancers or one you think can be traced back to its manufacturer, reach out to a lawyer for help. Depending on your situation, attorneys can fight these cases as a class action, mass tort, workers' compensation, or personal injury claim like Deanne's. The sooner you seek legal help, the faster you'll get justice.



# TAKE A **BREAK**

E S V S J V S M L B K L L I E  
Q D E X K X U L E X N I E H O  
T Z U R Z O A G F P P D A N G  
O Q S T O V O G Z O C O R E M  
M I E S I M C B F H N F N E V  
K Z C T W H S Y Y C N F I R N  
Z Z S L V Z L W K S O A N C U  
F E T K C A P K C A B D G S S  
F J U B O J H X P J Y X T N J  
E Y U S T L O A X A A G M U L  
J V E V U Q J G R A M E K S W  
E E F R I E N D S V T K M W A  
E C U D O R P N W E E T N S Z  
K C P P N S F I O N T S R Z W  
B Y A R D W O R K Y Q M T W P

Backpack  
Books  
Daffodil  
Festival  
Friends  
Harvest  
Learning  
Meteor  
Produce  
Smores  
Sunscreen  
Yardwork



## TOMATO GNOCCHI KEBABS

*Inspired by Delish.com*

### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup fresh basil
- 1/4 cup and 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 tsp capers
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 clove garlic
- Kosher salt
- 1 12-oz package fresh gnocchetti
- 2 pints cherry tomatoes
- 2 small red onions, cut into 2-inch pieces
- Freshly ground black pepper

### Directions

1. In a food processor, combine parsley, basil, 1/4 cup oil, capers, lemon juice, and garlic to make salsa verde. Blend until smooth, season to taste with salt, and chill until ready to serve.
2. If using bamboo skewers, soak in water to prevent scorching.
3. In a large bowl, toss gnocchetti, tomatoes, onions, and remaining oil until coated. Season with salt and pepper, then thread gnocchetti, tomatoes, and onions onto the skewers.
4. On a grill preheated to medium-high, cook the kebabs, flipping halfway through, until the tomatoes are blistered and the gnocchetti is browned (7–8 minutes).
5. Transfer kebabs to a platter, drizzle with salsa verde, and serve.

## THE LITTLE-KNOWN STORY BEHIND OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM

### Its Author Was a Lawyer on the Job

If you remember the name Francis Scott Key at all, you probably remember him as the poet whose piece “The Defense of Fort M’Henry” became “The Star-Spangled Banner.” As kids, most Americans learn about Key’s iconic moment writing the poem while standing on the deck of a ship during the War of 1812. There, with rockets exploding overhead, inspiration struck, and he scribbled a poem we still sing today. However, that vignette isn’t the whole story — far from it!

Key wasn’t a patriotic poet by trade. In fact, he only got the chance to write “The Defense of Fort M’Henry” because of his career as a lawyer. He was onboard a British ship that day not to write or fight but to negotiate the release of a prisoner of war named Dr. William Beanes.



According to Smithsonian Magazine, British soldiers captured Beanes when he tried to protect his Maryland home. The War of 1812 was well underway, and the British had already burned down the White House in Washington, D.C., and set their sights on Baltimore. When they swept Beanes off to a ship named the Tonnant floating in the Chesapeake Bay, Key attempted a legal rescue.

Armed with a letter revealing Beanes had once treated British soldiers, Key successfully boarded the Tonnant and negotiated the doctor’s release on Sept. 13 — but it was too late for escape. The British troops were heading for Baltimore, so they kept Key and Beanes on deck in temporary captivity until the battle was over.

The Tonnant was moored 8 miles from Maryland’s Fort McHenry, and its deck gave Key the perfect vantage point for poetic inspiration. According to Smithsonian, he said, “It seemed as though Mother Earth had opened and was vomiting shot and shell in a sheet of fire and brimstone.”

The clash continued until dawn. Then, as Key watched, the sky lit up to reveal the American flag still flying over the fort. The lawyer quickly pulled a letter from his pocket and scribbled the words that would later become “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

The British let Key and Beanes walk, and his poem became a national sensation — not bad for 24 hours of writing and lawyering!





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## CHOOSE THE RIGHT SITTER FOR YOUR PET

Your Family May Not Be Up to the Task!

When your children were young, you wouldn't trust their care to any old babysitter, would you? Of course not! Now, your pets are no different. When you head out for a summer vacation, they deserve to be cared for by someone who will pamper and protect them the same way you would. The only problem is, who?



### Friends and Family vs. Professionals

You may be tempted to ask your sibling, friend, or child to watch your pet. This can be a great solution because you trust them, and they've bonded with your furry friend already. But have you considered a professional? Some situations may call for a little more. Use these questions to help you decide:

- Will your friend or family member be able to visit your home regularly or stay there temporarily while you're gone to avoid disrupting your pet's routine?
- Does your pet have a disability or need to take medication that would be better handled by a professional?
- Does your friend or family member know how to stay cool and react calmly in case of a veterinary emergency?

If your loved one is pressed for time or easily stressed, or your pet has medical needs, you may be better off working with a professional.

### How to Find the Right Pro

When choosing a professional pet sitter, don't start with the flier on the stop sign pole down the street (it was probably put up by a 10-year-old). Instead, call your pet's vet, groomer, and/or trainer and ask if they can recommend a nearby pet sitter. You can also ask friends and family who are conscientious pet owners. Then, thoroughly check the sitter's credentials and experience. Look for signs that they're serious about their work, like certifications, insurance, and background check information, and set up an interview and meet-and-greet with your pet.

If you can't find a sitter through your network, consider online groups like the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters, Care.com, Pet Sitters International, Rover, or TrustedHousesitters, and use the same vetting strategy. For more help choosing a great sitter, visit [HumaneSociety.org/resources](https://www.humanesociety.org/resources).

