

Niagara Hospice gearing up for 13th annual Hospice Gran Fondo

Niagara Hospice press release

Niagara Hospice is looking forward to the 13th annual Hospice Gran Fondo bike ride, taking place Aug. 1. "Gran Fondo" originates in Italy, where long-distance bike rides are followed by large celebrations. The event starts and ends at the Niagara Hospice campus, located at 4675 Sunset Drive, Lockport.

The Hospice Gran Fondo offers riders the choice of a 15-, 33- or 62-mile route. Each one features a number of rest stops stocked with refreshments. Following the ride, participants return to the Niagara Hospice campus for the post-race celebration, featuring food, drinks and live music by MJ & the Way. Those who do not participate in the ride may purchase a separate ticket to attend the after-party.

Many individuals ride in memory of a loved one. Proceeds from the event support the specialized care and services provided by the nonprofit organization. Anyone interested in registering for the Hospice Gran Fondo can visit www.hospicegranfondo.com. Call 716-280-0766 for more information.

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Serious injury motor vehicle accident in Porter

Submitted by the Niagara County Sheriff's Office

On Monday, June 29, at approximately 10:11 a.m., the Niagara County Communications Center received a report of a serious personal injury motor vehicle accident in front of 1678 Braley Road in the Town of Porter. Initial responding patrol units confirmed the crash involved a dirt bike.

The operator of the dirt bike, 20-year-old Kayden Smith of Youngstown, was found unconscious and suffering from serious injuries. Deputies and EMS personnel immediately began providing emergency medical care at the scene. Smith was transported by Mercy Flight to the Erie County Medical Center with life-threatening injuries. She continues to recover.

The operator of the pickup truck involved in the crash was treated at the scene for minor injuries.

The preliminary investigation indicates the dirt bike attempted to enter Braley Road through a tree line and pulled into the path of a westbound pickup truck traveling on Braley Road.

The crash remains under investigation by the Niagara County Sheriff's Office accident investigation unit (AIU).

Momming as a Millennial (cont.)

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That's where emotional validation comes in. And if you're anything like me, you may have wondered: "If I comfort my child during a tantrum, am I rewarding the behavior?"

Here's what I've learned: Validation doesn't mean giving in. You can acknowledge what they're feeling while still holding firm boundaries.

So, what does emotional validation actually look like?

These are a few of the practices I'm working on as I learn to become a better active listener for my children. I'm certainly not perfect, but they've helped me slow down and respond differently when emotions run high.

•**Be fully present.** I try to put down my phone, make eye contact and give my child my full attention. Sometimes the greatest gift I can offer isn't advice. It's my presence.

•**Listen before I solve.** My mama bear instinct is to jump straight into problem-solving. But I'm learning that my children don't always need solutions right away. Sometimes they simply need someone to hear them. Instead of offering advice immediately, I try asking, "Can you tell me more about what happened?" or "What was the hardest part?"

•**Name the emotion I see.** My children don't always have the words to describe what they're feeling, so I'm trying to help them put words to those big emotions. Instead of assuming or brushing it off, I might say, "It sounds like you're feeling really frustrated," or "I wonder if you're disappointed because things didn't go the way you hoped." By naming the emotion, I hope they'll eventually learn to recognize and express it themselves.

•**Reflect before I redirect.** This one has been a game-changer for me. I'm learning that I don't have to agree with my child's reaction to acknowledge it. Before I correct the behavior or jump into consequences, I try to say something like, "That sounds really hard," or "I can understand why you feel that way." I want my children to know their emotions are valid, even when their behavior needs guidance.

•**Ask what they need.** As my children get older, I want them to know they don't have to navigate hard feelings alone. Sometimes

before offering advice, I try to ask, "Do you want me to just listen, or would you like help figuring out what to do next?" I'm hoping it will help them identify the kind of support they're looking for while reminding them they're not alone.

None of this excuses behavior or removes consequences. But it does communicate something essential: "Your feelings are safe with me." And when kids feel emotionally safe, they don't just come to us in the easy moments – they come to us in the hard ones, too.

This kind of parenting didn't come naturally to me. It wasn't what I grew up with. And I don't always get it right.

There are still moments when I slip into old patterns or feel my frustration rise before I can catch it. But I've learned that parenting isn't about being perfect. It just requires awareness and a willingness to keep trying.

I think often about the little girl I used to be, the one who just needed someone to say, "I see you. That makes sense."

That's what I'm trying to offer my children now.

Because when we change how we respond to feelings, we don't just change behavior in the moment – we change the story our children tell themselves about who they are allowed to be. And maybe that's what this work really is: Learning to speak to our children in the way we once needed to be spoken to ourselves.

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Christine Giarrizzo is a blogger, podcaster and mama of two, navigating the realities of modern motherhood in real time. Through her writing, she explores the tension between who we were, who we're expected to be, and who we actually want to become.

Her work focuses on helping millennial moms move out of survival mode and into a life rooted in clarity, creativity and self-expression. Through honest storytelling and research-backed insights, Christine creates space for women to question outdated norms, trust themselves, and build lives that feel aligned and fulfilling – while offering practical tools for moms who feel overwhelmed and ready to reconnect with themselves.

Find more from Christine at ContemplativeMama.com and on Instagram @ContemplativeMama1.

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Our office will be closed on **FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2026** through **SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2026** in observance of Independence Day. We will be re-opening on **MONDAY, JULY 6, 2026**

Have a Safe & Happy 4th of July

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