

KIDS

Westchester, a kid's paradise? Yup. From water parks to hip-hop classes, here are the best.

PARK FOR WATER FUN Willson's Waves

Mount Vernon
(914) 813-6990; westchestergov.com/PARKS/ParksLocations02/WillsonsWoods.htm

➔ Water, water everywhere—that's what you'll find at Willson's Waves, Westchester's very own aquatic wonderland, located in the 23-acre Willson's Woods Park, one of the oldest parks in the County. It's our fave place to splash around in a wave pool, soar down an 18-foot-high water slide, and enjoy a spray deck and fountains. And the best part? You can experience it all for the price of a Westchester County Parks Pass. Cool.

THEATER CLASSES Applause Westchester

Mamaroneck
(914) 835-2200; applauseny.com

➔ Here, it's okay if your kids are little divas. The theater instructors have seen it already, being showbiz pros who work—right now, not years ago—in all areas of

the entertainment biz, from Broadway to film. Applause offers classes for kids as young as four months, though "we're not doing entire 'book shows' or trying to put on a full play with kindergartners," says Director of Operations Heather Capelle. Instead, the focus is on teaching acting through improvisation, games, and the nuts-and-bolts of pitch, diction, and projection. So, by the time older kids move on to master classes, rehearsing for shows that are eventually performed in a real Off-Broadway theater, they're full of confidence and enthusiasm, not quivering lips and knocking knees.

SOCCER STORE The Village Soccer Shop

Dobbs Ferry
(914) 231-7577
villagesoccershop.com

➔ You could go to a big-box sporting-goods store for basic soccer gear, but why would you, when you've got the Village Soccer Shop? The year-old store stocks not only

the major-name basics but also a great selection of hand-picked, high-end merchandise from brands like Umbro and Puma; coveted Select balls from Denmark; Italian-made socks from Diadora; street soccer/lifestyle duds from ultra-hip names like Calle and Monta; retro jerseys from COPA Football of Holland; and tons of soccer-related books, toys, DVDs, and games (many imported) from Panini, Topps Match Attax, and FT Champs. There's just no place (this side of Brazil) as possessed by the game as Daniel D'Angelo's under-the-radar (until now) little Dobbs Ferry shop.

SPECIAL-OCCASION CAKES Hamburger Cake at Dream Cakes Bakery

Cortlandt Manor
(914) 734-2253
dreamcakesbakery.net

➔ From a distance, this round hamburger cake looks like the real thing, complete with lettuce, mustard, and ketchup. It's all colored



buttercream, including the "seeds" on the bun. In reality, the bun is vanilla cake; the patty is chocolate cake, and inside is a ribbon of fudge. The cake started as a special the bakery created for Father's Day, but it has turned into a summertime staple (meaning, yes, they have it in stock; in fall and winter, order at least two days in advance). Aiming to please is part of the owner's motto: "You dream it, we make it." And yes, junk-food junkies: they also do a pizza-slice cake for custom orders.

PLACE TO THROW A PARTY Life The Place To Be

Ardsley
(914) 591-4400; lifetheplacetobe.com

➔ A place that calls itself "Life The Place to Be" (pictured left) deserves an award just for sheer chutzpah. But, in this case, the chutzpah is not unwarranted, because this ultra-chic, tricked-out, 29,000-square-foot space, located (can you believe it?) in a former trucking warehouse is the place to be—to dine on Abigail Kirsch's award-winning food (it's Life's exclusive caterer); to play arcade games (there's 3,000 square feet dedicated to them); to bowl a 300 (or a 100, or an 80); to climb a wall; or to pop the question (there's an on-premises ceremony site just in case you're the impulsive type).



Westchester
2010