

# Sunday

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## PARENT TO PARENT

# Make the most out of free time

By Heidi Stevens | TRIBUNE REPORTER

**A**h, spring. Time to clean, organize, plant and pollinate—all those endeavors that point to new life ahead. We offer up a few tips to help usher in the season.

► **Sign up for:** The What's for Dinner newsletter from iVillage. The Web site sends a dinner recipe, plus suggestions for a side dish and dessert, to your inbox each weekday, saving you the hassle of trying to come up with new ideas in the kitchen. Some recent meals: dilled shrimp scampi with artichoke hearts, best-ever meat loaf and Greco lemon chicken burrito. We like to save up a few day's worth to help plan the weekly grocery list. Go to [food.ivillage.com](http://food.ivillage.com) and click on "What's for Dinner" to sign up.

► **Rent:** "Dan in Real Life," newly released on DVD. The movie follows advice columnist Dan Burns (Steve Carell) as he raises his three girls, juggles his well-intentioned but meddling extended family and re-enters the dating world after the death of his wife. It's a sweet story that rarely relies on stereotypes.

► **Click on:** [Savvydaddy.com](http://Savvydaddy.com), a new online magazine for dads started by northwest suburban resident Tony Chen. He launched the site in early April, he says, "because I need it myself!" Savvy Daddy offers how-to articles, message boards, essays, links to cool Web sites and more. Plus a portion of the site's profits are donated to children's charities selected by Savvy Daddy users.

► **Read:** "25 ways to save money on health care" in the May issue of Parents magazine. The article tells you how to conserve cash by, among other things, picking the right health care plan for your family, using a flexible spending account and looking for errors on your doctor and hospital bills. Our two favorite tips? Ask your doc for free samples, since pharmaceutical companies keep doctors' offices stocked with all the latest pain relievers, antibiotic creams and the like. And if your insurance company denies coverage for a service, appeal the decision. If your appeal is denied, contact your state insurance commission.



◀ **Use:** Zwaggle, a new online swap meet where you can unload your gently used children's clothing, toys, books, furniture and accessories in exchange for other people's gently used gear. It's free to join and you earn "zoints" (Zwaggle points) for every item you pass along to another family. Then you use your zoints to get stuff you need. It's a budget-friendly, eco-friendly, user-friendly system. Go to [zwaggle.com](http://zwaggle.com) to sign up.

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► **Mark your calendar:** For May 21, when pregnant gals can give into their ice-cream cravings for free at Baskin-Robbins. The ice cream chain will offer complimentary 3-ounce cups or cones of their new soft-serve product to expectant mothers between 11 a.m. and 10 p.m. that day. No word on whether pickles will be offered.

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