



Empowerment and Travel Cornerstones of Renewal Retreats

Bay Area Single Mom Ellen Walker merges 25 years in travel industry with abiding interest in health and wellness to start new non-profit designed to provide individuals and families with journeys for mind, body and spirit that leave them reinvigorated and empowered

Princess Alaska Cruise in July to feature workshop taught by
Positive Parenting with a Plan: FAMILY Rules author Dr. Matthew Johnson

San Francisco, CA February 4, 2008. The travel industry meets the forces of empowerment, health and wellness in a new non-profit founded by a Bay Area single mom, Ellen Walker. Combining extensive experience in the travel industry with her long abiding interest in the fields of health, wellness and personal transformation, Walker founded RENEWAL RETREATS, a 501(c)(3) non-profit that aims to provide journeys for mind, body and spirit that enable those who take them to live more integrated and effective lives. Additionally, RENEWAL RETREATS will distribute funds to women and families, who without this assistance would not have the financial wherewithal to enjoy and benefit from these experiences.

Cruises, spa and yoga retreats, seminars, and other programs are carefully structured so that individuals and families not only have a great time, but also learn the skills necessary for enjoying healthy relationships with the self, with others and with one's community.

While it's long been said that travel broadens the mind, vacations—especially for families—can be challenging for both adults and children. As an alternative that brings families together, RENEWAL RETREATS is pairing a Princess Alaska Cruise along with a *Positive Parenting with a Plan* workshop taught by Dr. Matthew Johnson, author of *Positive Parenting with a Plan: FAMILY Rules*. Open to parents and children ages 6-17, the cruise—along with the parenting shipboard workshop—is planned for July 27 through August 3, 2008.

While popular TV shows such as *Nanny 911* and *Supernanny* give hope to millions of viewers as they attempt to parent and run their households, the *Positive Parenting* workshops are hands-on affairs that give parents strategies, action plans and the tools to help design a successful family life inside and outside the home.

“Unlike the sometimes band-aid approaches you see in these deservedly popular shows,” says Dr. Johnson, who lived and practiced in Alaska for twenty years, “the *Positive Parenting with a Plan* workshop is a hands-on experience. One that not only takes place in a setting of almost unsurpassed natural beauty, but one that provides a simple, thorough and complete plan of action for all family members to follow so they can make the responsible choices that lead to a healthy, functional and peaceful home environment.”

More information on the cruise and the *Positive Parenting with a Plan* workshop is available [here](#)

A complete calendar of RENEWAL RETREATS offerings—including local Bay Area parenting workshops in Marin and Healdsburg—along with yoga and women's retreats, is available at www.renewalretreats.org

The Star Princess offers unparalleled views of the Alaskan coast as well as a spa, fitness center, nightclubs, fine food and a myriad of entertainment options for adults and children alike. In addition there will also be children's programs.

"Hands down, I have always found that traveling via ship is the easiest & best way to travel with children," says RENEWAL RETREATS founder Ellen Walker. "My son has been traveling with me since he was six months old, and ships offer babysitters, kid's camp programs and more than enough age-appropriate activities and excursions to make everyone happy."

Cost of the Cruise is \$1049 per adult (with discounted children's rates available) plus a workshop fee of \$695.00 per family, with a single parent discount also available.

Revenues and other monies will be used to offer financial assistance to women, men and families who otherwise would not have the financial wherewithal to access and benefit from what RENEWAL RETREATS has to offer.

"Most often," says Walker, "it is those with the abundant twin resources of money and time who are able to go to a retreat center and renew their body, mind and spirit. What RENEWAL RETREATS does is combine revenues with grants and other streams of income so that those who are qualified and in need—and who otherwise could not afford it—can enjoy the benefits of a beautiful environment, along with expertise on a variety of subjects such as parenting, and the opportunity to honor and nurture the self."

About Renewal Retreats

RENEWAL RETREATS provides education and enlightenment via programs and experiences designed to enrich minds, bodies and spiritual well-being. Nurturing environments are carefully structured so that individuals and families learn the habits necessary for enjoying healthy relationships with the self, with others and with one's community. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, it aims to help others live more integrated and effective lives. As such, it puts aside revenues in order to make programs available not only to those who can afford them but also—based on specific screening and qualifying criteria—to those who might normally find access difficult due to financial pressures. For more information, go to www.renewalretreats.org

About Ellen Walker

Before founding RENEWAL RETREATS, Ellen Walker worked for over 25 years in the travel industry. After leading the west coast sales teams for companies such as Norwegian American Cruises, Royal Viking Line, Crystal Cruises, and Classic Custom Vacations, she began her own company, Fine Wine Travel. These experiences—coupled with her ongoing interest in the pursuit of health and wellness, empowerment and personal growth—led to the formation of RENEWAL RETREATS in 2007. Ellen resides in Northern California's Marin County with her 16-year-old son and their two beloved Weimaraners.

About Dr Matthew Johnson and FAMILY Rules

Dr. Matthew A. Johnson ("Dr. J.") is a licensed clinical psychologist who has worked with parents and children in outpatient settings, group homes, residential treatment centers and inpatient psychiatric hospitals since 1982. Formerly the Clinical Director for Charter North Outpatient Counseling Center in Fairbanks, Alaska, he is also the President of *FAMILY Rules* and author of *Positive Parenting with a Plan (Grades K-12): FAMILY Rules*. Early in his career he noted that out of control children sent to treatment facilities would progress to the point of being discharged, only to have the parents complain a short time later that once back in the home they reverted to their old ways. Realizing that the children were thriving under circumstance that the parents were failing to replicate in the home, he was inspired to write the book in order to give them the tools necessary to win "on the battlefield of parental warfare," and maintain peace and progress in the home. He has been featured on "The Early Show", CNN, ESPN2, *USA Today*, and 250+ radio programs. More information on Dr Johnson is available at www.family-rules.com