2017 PAA Survey Results: Neighborhood Recommendations

PAA members voted for their favorite family-oriented places, activities and experiences--from neighborhood restaurants, shops, sports classes, playgrounds and parks to doctors, dentists and more--via our annual survey in early 2017; below are the results. Please note that the most commonly recommended items are ranked with numbers; others are bulleted. PAA member quotations are listed in quotes after recommendations.

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**Favorite playground**

1. **John Jay Park**: FDR drive from East 76-78th Streets – “Has more to offer than other neighborhood playgrounds.” “Great especially in summer for water play.” “Fun sprinklers”

Other recommended playgrounds:

- **Billy Johnson Playground, Central Park**: East 67th Street and 5th Ave – “Best slide in NYC – go early to avoid a line.” “Giant granite slide is super fun for kids of all ages.” “I like that this playground is set amid the natural element of Central Park so kids actually get to play in nature.” “Fun sprinkler in the middle in summer is especially good for toddlers.”
- **DeKovats Playground at Asphalt Green**, 91st Street and York Ave: York Avenue at 91st Street – “This playground is has separate climbing equipment for big and little kids, water sprinklers, a few swings for big and little kids and is rarely crowded.”
- **East 72nd street playground, Central Park**: East 72nd Street and 5th Ave – “This is a great playground for hide and seek.” “This playground was renovated in 2016 and now has a fun push-button water fountain as well as the usual water sprinklers.”
- **Heckscher Playground, Central Park**: 61st-63rd Street, mid park – “Good rock climbing for older kids.” “There is a bathroom here!” “Giant sandbox and fun water sprinklers and water spouts for younger kids.”
- **James Michael Levin Playground, Central Park**: East 76th street at 5th Ave – “Fun Alice in Wonderland water spray fountain in the center.” “Great sprinklers for running around.”
- **The Playroom**, 1439 1st Avenue at 75th Street – “Super fun (but pricey) indoor play space.”
- **St. Catherine’s Park**: 1st Ave between 67/68 Streets

**Favorite park**

1. **Central Park**: Central Park stretches from North 110th Street to Central Park South at 59th Street, and from Central Park West at 8th Ave to East at 5th Ave. – “Beautiful spaces for different ages.” “Our child enjoys watching the horses, going on rides, running around, and the zoo.” “Perfect for a picnic with friends on the Great Lawn, tons of space for kids to run around and explore nature.”

Other recommended parks in our neighborhood:

- **Rockefeller University campus**: 1230 York Ave - “Great place for the kids to free play”

**Recommended activities for families**

- **The American Museum of Natural History**: Central Park W & 79th St – “Great for families and good family programs.” “Love the Planetarium.”
- **Art Farm In the City**: 19 E. 91st Street – “Fun weekend mornings ‘on the farm’ where your kids can meet, pet/ touch and feed animals.” “Arrive when it opens at 8am as it gets crowded by 9am.”
- **Arthur Ross Terrace at The American Museum of Natural History**: near 81st Street and Columbus – “An almost secret water playground with huge fountain sprays.”
• Brooklyn Bridge Park Pier 6 playgrounds: Brooklyn Bridge Park Greenway, Brooklyn - “This is our favorite NYC playground – an unbelievable ‘waterlab’ sandbox ‘village’ plus slides and swings galore.”
• Carnegie Hall Kids/ Family events - “For ages 2-10.”
• Central Park zoo, especially Tisch Children's Zoo: 64th St and 5th Ave
• Central park for sledding in the winter – ‘Cedar Hill and Pilgrim Hill are great for winter sledding.’
• The New York Botanical Garden: 2900 Southern Blvd, Bronx, NY - “The holiday train show is epic, a family favorite.”
• New York Public Library Early Literacy Programs, various – “Free, for all ages.”
• Riding the Roosevelt island tram: E 59th St & 2nd Avenue – “After the fun ride/ great view, bring a picnic and let the kids run at Four Freedoms Park.”
• Sotheby’s: 1334 York Avenue – “Check out art with your kids at Sotheby’s.”
• Victorian Gardens at Wollman Rink, Central Park - “A fun amusement park for pre-K and elementary school kids in Central Park”
• Weill Greenberg Center, WCMC building / 1305 York Ave – “Ride the escalators with your toddler here, checking out the art on the ceiling as you ride up and down. If you need another nearby activity, check out the fish tanks across the street in Helmsley Lobby.”

Favorite art experiences

1. MoMA: 11 W 53rd St – “Check out MoMA’s hands-on Art Lab and MoMA Kids and families programs.”

Other recommended art venues and experiences:
• The Art Center: 423 E 75th St
• Children’s Museum of the Arts (CMA): 103 Charlton St. NYC – “Brilliant for kids but hard to get to from UES.”
• Galli Theatre, 151 W. 26th Street, 7th Floor in the Gloria Maddox Theater: “Fun and interactive theatre events for kids.”
• Guggenheim Museum, 1071 5th Avenue at 89th Street - “Check out their Stroller Tour for 0-2 yr olds).”
• Kids at Art, 1412 2nd Ave
• Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met): 1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street
• New Victory Theater: 209 W 42nd St
• PAA classes, 435 E 70th Street - “Especially Ms. Caitlin’s art classes.”

Educational classes, daycare and preschools and summer camps

Educational Classes
• Art Farm In the City: 19 E. 91st Street
• Ballet Academy East: 1651 3rd Ave
• Kidville: 163 E 84th St
• Kids at Art: 1412 2nd Ave
• House of Jai: 1456 1st Avenue - “Music class: Making Melodies.”
• Little Maestros: 344 E 69th St
• PAA classes, 435 E 70th Street - “Especially Aaron Short’s music classes.”
• WeBop University at the Jazz Academy, Lincoln Center, 10 Columbus Circle - “For 8 mo-5 years”
Daycare and Preschool
• Bright Horizons in Payson House: 435 E 70th Street, 2nd floor – “Teachers in age groups 2+ are amazing!”
• Church of the Epiphany Day School: 1393 York Ave – “Excellent, nurturing preschool with a wonderful community but expensive.”
• Free to Be Under Three (preschool): 1157 Lexington Ave
• Jelly Bean Family Day Care: 516 E 84th St
• PAA-sponsored Play-and-Learn Cooperative (PAL) – “PAL is great!”
• Woodward Jr Nursery School: 435 E 70th Street, 2nd Floor: “Pre-school classes for 3-5 year olds.”

Summer camps or holiday / school vacation camps
• Asphalt Green
• Buckley Country Day Camp
• Camp Yomi
• PAA Rug Rats sports
• Summer Sault at Town School

Neighborhood sports and swim classes

Sports classes
• Cavaliers Kids NYC, after school and summer camp sports
• Gymtime: 1520 York Ave,
• Kids for Good, classes offered at Magic Activity Center, 510 E 7th Street, and Church of the Epiphany, 1393 York Ave; contact kidsforgoodnyc@gmail.com to find out details. “Formerly Victory NYC, Kids for Good combines a life skills and sports curriculum to help kids develop a healthy and active lifestyle, along with a love for helping others in their community. My 5 year old loves the combination of martial arts, gymnastics, yoga, and choreography into their sports curriculum and we love that the awesome teacher, Nikki Barker, incorporates life skills like respect, discipline, and action into classes.”
• Kids in Sports: 1420 2nd Ave
• Magic Activity Center: 510 E 74th Street - “Our 2 year old absolutely loves the gym class here, plus there are a dozen open gym times during the week that you can access when you register for a class.”
• Sokol New York: 420 E 71st St
• 92Y
• West Side Soccer (AYSO)

Swim classes
• Asphalt Green (kids pool w/ adjustable depth according to height
• New York Health & Racquet Club (private classes)
• Penguin City Swim and Physique Swim – “Friendly instructors and responsive, excellent customer service.” “We’ve used Penguin Swim City for both of our kids (parent-and-me classes for babies and private 1 on 1 classes) and seen real progress and confidence development. Plus they offer a 10% discount for PAA members.”
• 14th Street YMCA swimming classes – “A bit of a hike but the swim lessons are half the price of those at 92nd!”
• 92nd Y swimming classes

Pools
• **John Jay Park pool**: East of York Avenue on 77th St. – “Great to have a public pool on the UES but it is a bummer that there is no shallow end for kids.”

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**Favorite neighborhood library and book reading**

**Library**
1. **Webster Library**: 1465 York Ave at 77th Streert – “Appreciate you can bring a stroller here (vs. 67th Street library.)”

Other recommended libraries in our neighborhood:
- **53rd Street New York Public Library**: 8 West 53rd Street – “Brand new, opened last year, has a very large and modern children’s section.”
- **67 street library**: 328 East 67th Street (near First Ave.) - “Good location and kids’ selection on 2nd floor but frustrated by lack of stroller entry.”
- **Yorkville Library**: 222 East 79th Street, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues– “Good story time, great books.” “Has an open coloring session for kids on Saturdays at 10am, is usually not too busy.

**Venues for kids’ readings**
- **Shakespeare and Co Book Shop**: 939 Lexington Avenue
- **Storytime at the Nolan Library**, the Met: 1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street

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**Stores for Children’s Toys and Clothes**

**Children’s Toy Store**
1) **Mary Arnold Toys**: 1010 Lexington Ave
2) **Giggle**: 1033 Lexington Ave – “Amazing selection of baby and toddler furniture, clothes, gear and clothes but pricey”

Others recommend:
- **Fantastic Toys**: 1503 3rd Ave – “Free gift wrapping”
- **Gap, H&M, Target and Zara** for kids’ clothes
- **Learning Express Toys**: 1029 3rd Ave
- **State News**: 112 E 86th St
- **State News**: 2nd Ave – “Great place for birthday supplies and balloons”
- **Shakespeare and Co Book Shop**, 939 Lexington Ave

**Online**:
- **Amazon**: Amazon.com: “Best for toys”, “Great for birthday party supplies”
- **Hanna Andersson**: www.hannaandersson.com - “High quality and timeless girls’ clothes, order when they have a sale.”
- **Hollar.com**, “On-line dollar store, excellent for shopping for stocking stuffers and birthday supplies.”
- **Google Express**: “Next day shipping to stores like Costco, Target, Fairway, Best Buy, Target, Whole Foods, etc.”

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Birthday party recommendations

- Birthday supply websites: Birthday In a Box, Hollar, Oriental trading Company, Party City, Hollar.com
- Birthday party entertainment: Magic Evan – “Awesome magician plus he has a great website with party planning tips and ideas.”
- Indoor party venues: 92Y (1395 Lexington Ave), NY Kids Club (219 E 76th Street); The Playroom NYC (1439 1st Avenue); My Gym (250 E 60th Street and 1608 1st Avenue / 83rd St); The Little Gym (207 E 94th St);
- Outdoor party venues:
  - John Jay Park: FDR drive from East 76-78th Streets: picnic tables, fully-equipped playground, water sprinklers, bathrooms
  - St. Catherine’s Park: 1st Ave between 67/68 Streets: picnic tables, fully-equipped playground, water sprinklers, bathrooms
  - Carl Schurz Park, East End Av To East River, E 84 St To E 90 St: fully-equipped playground, green grass on which to picnic, room to roam or ride scooters / bicycles along the East River, a pair of restrooms.
  - Arthur Ross Pinetum Playground, Central Park: picnic tables, open space to roam, swings, fairly close to a bathroom.
  - Billy Johnson Playground, Central Park: East 67th Street and 5th Ave: A picnic table and green grass on which to picnic, giant sandbox and swings, water sprinklers, a giant granite slide, fairly close to a bathroom.
  - Heckscher Playground, Central Park: 61st-63rd Street, mid park: picnic tables, fully-equipped playground, water sprinklers, bathrooms, and the bonus of Umpire Rock to climb.

Day getaways

- Blue Hill at Stone Barns: (Pocantico Hills, NY)
- Brooklyn Bridge Pier 6 Park (Brooklyn, NY)
- Brooklyn Children's Museum (Brooklyn, NY)
- Bruce Museum (Greenwich, CT)
- Cold Spring (Philipstown, Putnam County, NY): “Has hiking and Main St with restaurants including one that seemed food allergy conscious”
- Coney Island beach and boardwalk (Brooklyn, NY) – “Close to NYC: beach, boardwalk and rides (at Luna Park).” “Tip: if you have a membership to the Central Park zoo, you park for free at the NY Aquarium and then just hop over to the beach.”
- Cradle of Aviation Museum (Garden City, NY) – “Great air and space museum, with lots of airplanes and a real lunar module.”
- Diggerland (West Berlin, NJ)
- Governor's Island (New York Harbor, NY): “Take the ferry to Governor’s Island, a 172 acre island in the heart of New York Harbor, is only 800 yards from Lower Manhattan”
- Hershey's Park (Hershey, PA)
- Hither Hills State Park (Montauk, NY)
- Jersey Gardens Outlet Mall (Elizabeth, NJ)
- Liberty Science Center (Liberty State Park, Jersey City, NJ)
- Norwalk Aquarium (Norwalk, CT)
- Riamede Farm (Chester, NJ): “For apple picking.”
• Sesame Place (Langhorne, PA): “Has both water and dry rides. Age appropriate for 1.5 year olds and up.”
• Wave Hill (Bronx, NY)

**Weekend getaways and vacation spots**

• Asbury Park (Monmouth County, NJ): “Accessible by NJ Transit, playground on the beach, antique pinball museum”
• Blackberry Farm (Walland, TN): “Quick flight, easy to get to, great for adults and kids, excellent on-site child care.”
• Camelback Lodge and Indoor Waterpark (Tannersville, PA)
• Crayola Experience (Easton PA)
• Disney World! (Orlando, FL)
• Delaware beaches: “Indian River Inlet - little cottages are great and affordable for a family.”
• Great Wolf Lodge (Pocono Mountains, PA): “Our toddler and elementary school-aged kids LOVE this water park.”
• Jersey Shore, NJ
• Miami, FL
• Mohonk Mountain House, New Paltz, NY [www.mohonk.com](http://www.mohonk.com)
• Philadelphia, PA: “Great art and history”
• Washington DC

**Favorite neighborhood take-out restaurants**

2) Up Thai (Thai): 1411 2nd Ave b/t 73rd St & 74th St
3 - tie) Gotham Pizza (Pizza): 1443 York Ave
3 - tie) Moti Mahal Deluxe (Indian): 1149 1st Ave – “Delicious food take-in or take-out but keep in mind delivery takes a while”

Others recommended:
• Anatolia Mediterranean Cuisine (Mediterranean, Turkish): 401 E 62nd St
• Calexico (Mexican): 1491 2nd Ave
• Dulce de Leche Bakery (Argentinian bakery): NJ / Phone: (201) 869-6999 – “Not in our neighborhood, but this Argentinian bakery in Jersey City delivers to Manhattan”
• Gotham Pizza (Pizza): 1443 York Ave
• Japan Express Food Truck – usually parked at York between 71/72 Streets – “Delicious and fresh hibachi stir fries at an unbeatable price.”
• Luke’s Lobster (Seafood): 242 E 81st St – “Pricey but worth it, especially if you take it to Central Park for a picnic.”
• McDonalds (Fast food): 1286 1st Avenue – “For the for kids’ happy meals”
• Mighty Quinn BBQ (BBQ): 1492 2nd Ave
• Persepolis (Persian/Iranian): 1407 2nd Ave
• Pizza Park (Pizza): 1233 1st Ave
• Rangoli (Indian): 1393 A 2nd Ave
• Shun Lee Palace (Chinese): 155 E 55th St
• Sedutto (Ice Cream): 1498 1st Ave
• The Sweet Shop (Ice Cream): 404 E 73rd St - “Go for ice cream and use your hospital employee discount”
• Vietnam (Vietnamese): 1700 2nd Ave – “Great sandwiches”

**Favorite neighborhood family-friendly restaurant**

1) BareBurger (American, Burgers): 1370 1st Ave b/t 73rd St & 74th St – “super accommodating for kiddos quick service and love the outdoor seating when it's warm.” “$3 milkshakes during happy hour”

Others recommended:
• 5 Napkin Burger (Burgers): 1325 2nd Ave
• Barking Dog (Diners): 1453 York Ave between 77/78 Streets
• Cafe Luka (Diner): 1319 1st Ave b/t 71st St & 70th St – “Easy to get table, large selection.”
• Calexico (Mexican): 1491 2nd Ave
• Eastfield's (Gastropub): 1479 York Ave
• Le Pain Quotidian (Belgian, Breakfast and Brunch): 1270 1st Ave —“Child’s menu is a great deal, especially at breakfast.”
• Maison Kayser (Breakfast and Brunch): 1294 3rd Ave
• Matsu (Japanese, Sushi): 411 E 70th St between York and 1st Aves The Meatball Shop
• Mel's Burger Bar (Burgers): 1450 Second Ave
• Patsy's (Italian, Pizza): 1279 1st Ave between 68/69th Streets
• Per Lei (Italian): 1347 2nd Ave
• Pizzeria Uno (Pizza): 220 East 86th Street – “Great deals on kids meals, including only $1.99 for a make-your-own sundaes for the kids.”
• Shake Shack (Burgers): 154 E 86th St
• Tony di Napoli (Italian): 1081 3rd Ave
• Writing Room (American): 1703 2nd Ave
• Up Thai (Thai): 1411 2nd Ave b/t 73rd St & 74th St

**Favorite neighborhood restaurants for breakfast and brunch**

1) Barking Dog (Diner): 1453 York Ave between 77/78 Streets – “High quality, affordable.” Just across the street from John Jay playground,” “Go right to the park after”

Others recommended:
• Atlantic Grill (Seafood): 1341 3rd Ave
• Dim Sum Go Go (Chinese): 5 East Broadway – “Outside of our neighborhood (in Chinatown) but a delicious brunch spot and never crowded at 10am for a dim sum adventure with the family.”
• EJ’s Luncheonette (Diner): 1271 3rd Ave b/t 73rd St & 74th St- “Great benedict!”
• Eli’s Table (American): 1413 3rd Ave
• Gotham Café (Café, Breakfast): 1298 2nd Ave b/t 68th St & 69th St – “Great for strollers lots of kid friendly options.”
• Jones Wood Foundry (British Gastropub): 401 E 76th St – “Hearty full English breakfast.”
• Le Pain Quotidien (Bakery, French): 1270 1st Ave between 68/69 – “Child’s menu is delicious and a surprisingly good deal, especially for breakfast.”
• Le Pain Quotidien (Bakery, French) in Central Park – “Excellent place to eat outside in the spring/summer/fall and then play in central park afterwards (or before).”
• The Loeb Boathouse Lakeside Restaurant / Central Park boathouse (American): E 72nd St & 5th Ave
• Maison Kayser (French Bakery): 1294 3rd Ave
• Mel’s Burger Bar (Burgers): 1450 Second Ave
• Maya (Mexican): 1191 1st Ave between 64th St & 65th St – “Go for the bottomless brunch (for special occasions).”
• Tavern62 by David Burke (American): 135 E 62nd St

Favorite neighborhood date night restaurants

1. Maya (Mexican): 1191 1st Ave between 64th St & 65th St
2. Moti Mahal Deluxe (Indian): 1149 1st Ave

Other recommended date night restaurants:
• Elios (Italian): 1621 2nd Ave
• Felice (Italian, Wine Bar): 1166 1st Ave at 64th Street
• Korali (Greek): 1662 3rd Ave
• Libertador (Argentine): 1725 2nd Ave
• Matsu (Japanese, Sushi): 411 E 70th St between York and 1st Aves – “A stand-in if we are feeling lazy.”
• Meatball Shop (American): 1462 2nd Ave
• The Seamstress (American): 339 E 75th St – “Not sure about the food but the drinks are superb!”
• Serafina (Italian): 1022 Madison Ave
• Sfoglia (Italian): 1402 Lexington Ave
• Tanoshi Sushi Sake Bar (sushi): 1372 York Ave – “Hands down the best sushi experience on UES.” “Tip: reserve far ahead”
• Uva (Italian): 1486 2nd Ave between 77/78 Streets
• Vaucluse (French): 100 E 63rd St
• Writing Room (American): 1703 2nd Ave

Favorite neighborhood café

1. Oslo Coffee Roasters: 422 E 75th St b/t York Ave & 1st Ave – “Awesome coffee”

Others recommend:
• Alice Teacup – Chapter II (Tea): 156 E 64th St and Chapter III: 220 E 81st St – “Best scones and original variety of teas!”
• Café in Belfer Building: 413 E 69th St – “Get a bacon, egg and cheese croissant and coffee/tea for $3.”
• Cafe Noi: 1465 2nd Ave
• Gotham Café: 1298 2nd Ave b/t 68th St & 69th St - “Great place to work on your computer – free wifi and relatively quiet.”
• Gregory’s: 1273 1st Ave – “Their whole wheat doughnut is terrific: a cake doughnut that isn’t dry at all.”
• Le Moulin a Café: 1439 York Ave b/t 76/77 Streets
• Le Pain Quotidien: 1270 1st Ave between 68/69 Streets – “Free wifi. Plus if you download and pay with their app, you get free food.”
• Sant Ambroèus Coffee Bar at Sotheby’s, 1334 York Ave, 10th floor: “Indoor/outdoor seating with great views.”

Grocery Store or Market

1) Matter of Health: 72nd Street/ 1st Ave
2) Agata & Valentina: 1505 First Ave - “Great fresh pasta options and plenty of stuffed pastas with hidden veggies! “Shop here for nice stuff”
3 tie) 67th Street Flea & Farmer’s Market: 67th Street between York and 1st Ave– “Open year round on Saturdays, 6am - 6pm. There are a great selection of local produce, baked goods and more.”
3 tie) Grace’s Market- 1299 2nd Ave

Others recommend:
• Citarella Gourmet Market: 1313 3rd Ave– “For nice stuff.”
• Costco: 517 E 117th St – “Take a Via (shared ride) there for just $5.”
• The Fresh Food Box program at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House via Grow NYC
• Gourmet Garage East: 301 E 64th St
• GrowNYC’s Fresh Food Box Program / Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share: Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, 331 East 70th Street - “The cost is $12 per bag and the produce is usually worth at least twice that amount. Pick up is on Tuesdays between 3:30 pm - 6:30 pm-- note that you have to pay the WEEK BEFORE to pick up the CSA the following week.”
• Gristedes: 1208 1st Ave - “For basics.”
• Fairway: 240 E 86th St – “Free delivery for order over $125.”
• Roy’s Fish Market: 1138 1st Ave – “Fresh fish, friendly fishmonger.”
• Trader Joe’s, Chelsea location: 675 6th Ave- “Reasonably quick ride on the F-train” “far away but least busy of all the TJ’s in the city, great selection”
• Whole Foods: 226 E 57th St - “Better than the Whole Foods by 87th, because almost everything is on the ground level”

Online
• Freshidrect: http://freshdirect.com/
• Amazon Fresh: https://fresh.amazon.com/

Pediatric doctor, dentist and other health care providers

Pediatric doctor
• Apple Pediatrics with specific recommendations for Drs. Farber, Nishawala and Varma: 157 E 72nd St
• Global Pediatrics, with a specific recommendation for Dr. Licata: 1559 York Avenue, Ground Floor
• Manhattan Pediatrics, with specific recommendations for Dr Sharon Ho and Snyder: 125 East 72nd Street
• Preeti Parikh, MD: 11 East 86th St
• Tribeca Pediatrics, with specific recommendations for Drs. Modi and Belosa: 304 E 62nd St
• Weill Cornell Medicine Primary Care - East Side, with specific recommendations for Drs. Kercher, Pozzuoli, Ogden and Rowe: 215 E. 85th Street

Pediatric dentist
• Bright Healthy Smiles, with a specific recommendation for Dr. Emilia Corielli: 1317 Third Ave
• Dr. Sara Babich, DDS: 116 E 84th St
• Pediatric Dentistry, with a specific recommendation for Jack L. Mitchell at 305 E 55th St - “Dr. Mitchell is awesome - our 4 year old actually looks forward to going to the dentist!”
• Slim Dental Kids: 1400 York Ave
• Ava Thaw, DDS: 342 E 67th St – “Family dentist, specializes in general dentistry and prosthodontics. She and her assistant are with kids and adults, especially those with dentist-phobias. Takes insurance. Has excellent education and training background.”

Other
• Allergies: Dr. Joyce Yu: 505 E 70th St
• Dermatology: Dr. Karen Chernoff: 1305 York Avenue
• ENT: Dr. Alison Maresh: 428 E 72nd St
• OB: Dr. Andrea Dobrenis: 425 E 61st St
• Pulmonology: Dr. Rizwana Popatia: 505 East 70th Street