

+THINK OUTSIDE the neighborhood **with August's transcendent supraculture+**

+WITNESS 8,000 years of Istanbul history **in our summer web carnival+**

+ACT LOCAL **thanks to expat+HAREM expeditions+**

+DEFINE the hybrid lifestyle **with our cultural innovators+**

+INTEGRATE YOUR COMMENTS across the web **we do it with Disqus+**

« [Designing la dolce vita](#)

[Home](#)

[Social media as self actualization](#) »

It takes a virtual village

By CATHERINE YIGIT



We don't meet up for coffee or playdates. In fact, on my infrequent visits to Ireland I've only met a few mothers from **the village** I turn to for parenting concerns. Instead, we're tied together by a link to Ireland and an internet connection.

In the last six years we've supported each other through relationship problems, illnesses, multiple pregnancies and births, several miscarriages, three weddings, one stillbirth and a marriage breakup. We come from a range of backgrounds and educational levels; all work, some outside the home and some as full-time mothers. Plus, we share the extra bond of having children born in the same month of the same year.

In spite of their being far away, they are as important to me as anyone I meet in daily life. These women listen when I feel like complaining, offer advice when I need it and share their experiences freely so I can learn. I trust them.

These **MagicMums** *allow me to parent by the standards I grew up with*, leaving me free from local Turkish concerns.

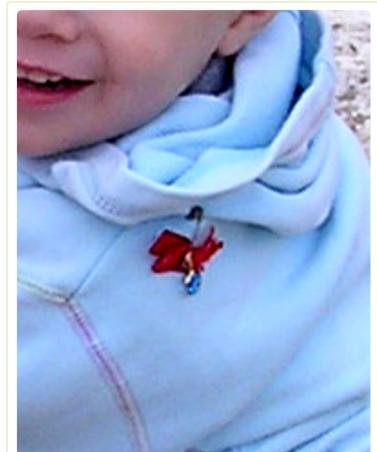
Bare feet causing flu. Cold drafts leading to pneumonia. They don't worry about my children's weight or hover over them while they eat. Should I give baby honey as my in-laws suggest? Not until they are over a year old, the village says. Why does the child cry so much at night? The in-laws say '**nazar**', someone has cast the evil eye and we must pin a glass charm on the baby's clothes, say prayers and blow away the spirits. The village suggests altering the child's feeding pattern to see if digestion problems could be the cause, a less romantic solution but definitely more practical.

Do you have a virtual network? What are its special advantages?

+++++

Catherine Yiğit is a native of Dublin, Ireland and writes from Çanakkale, northwestern Turkey where she lives with her Turkish husband and two children.

+++++



Nazar amulet by Catherine Yiğit

New in this global niche? You might want to get each post **delivered to your inbox directly**. Subscribe to **expat+HAREM's monthly newsletter** to get the latest info for global citizens and identity adventurers like you. Thanks for coming by! We're looking forward to getting to know you.

[+](#) Share / Save [↻](#) [f](#) [t](#) [↕](#)

Related posts:

1. **Same river, never twice**

November 16th, 2009 | Tags: [Catherine Yigit](#), [children](#), [evil eye](#), [expat+HAREM series](#), [Ireland](#), [It Takes A Village](#), [MagicMum](#), [motherhood](#), [nazar](#), [parenting](#), [social network](#) | Category: [community](#), [family](#), [home](#), [identity](#), [origin](#)

- **Elmira**

I lived in Bosnia for four years and know all too well the importance of turning to familiar voices for... familiarity. The new and unknown thrills me. And I wouldn't give up my crazy life exploring new places, people and cultures. But it can be overwhelming and many times lonely. My friends, who are spread across the world, are my anchor. They remind me that I'm not alone. And that I won't catch a cold from going outside with wet hair.

- **Anastasia**

Yes Catherine, that's one of the most disorienting parts of living in another culture (whether it's a foreign country or just a different region of your homeland): hearing constantly a majority opinion you don't share. Add in the enthusiasm with which Turks like to help parent other people's children -- running after them in the park to advise against letting a child eat ice cream on a cloudy day, for example -- and you stand a good chance of being overwhelmed.

- **Yazarc**

Rose, you're correct, there is no right or wrong in raising children. I think expats get to choose the best of both worlds. But when everyone around you is saying something contrary to what you believe having the backup of the village is very important.

I forgot to mention that the site was set up by an expat, an Irish woman living in France.

Amber and Val welcome! Magicmum is a terrific resource even when you're in Ireland.

- **Val**

Very well said.

Magicmum is a great site. I have found it so useful. Especially as in my neck of the woods I'm considered a 'blow in'.

- **Amber**

Hey Cathy,

Nice to see you are spreading the word about us here! Very eloquently written as always!

- **rosedeniz**

Oh, Catherine, how spot on you are. It isn't so much that the village is right vs. the in-laws and neighbors in Turkey are wrong, but that having a virtual village helps to make peace with different cultural norms. I find my expat friends are a great source of help with child-rearing perplexities (even those without children can understand the dilemmas), and it's both an online and offline thing. Maybe even because of the village I can live in Turkey more peacefully because I have a support network of my own choosing. Thanks for sharing this; it's something I can really relate to.

blog comments powered by Disqus