



# The Law Offices of Marc L. Shapiro, P.A.

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## Stars in Our Eyes for the Annual STAR Gala

February is a big month in our household, as preparations are underway for the STAR Gala on Feb. 12. The STAR Gala is an annual fundraising event for STARability, a local organization supporting children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our family and the office have been involved in the organization for several years now, and my wife, Holly, is one of the event co-chairs for this year's gala.

For months, I've watched Holly work toward this event, and we're so excited to see it come to fruition. And for years, I've watched her work tirelessly for our son, Nathan, and other people with intellectual and developmental disabilities as both a fundraising and housing chair for the organization.

Holly's involvement in STARability began after she and several other parents started a nonprofit organization called Roar. Their mission was to find housing for adults with disabilities to live independently. STARability was already active in the community and asked Roar to merge as the housing committee.

While there are many resources and organizations for children with special needs, there is very little available once they turn 22. Many people forget that children with disabilities become adults with disabilities, and parents and caregivers are often left scrambling for services. STARability was born from families like ours coming together to help their neighbors.

One of STARability's primary goals is to provide adults with disabilities with vocational training and help them find work. Currently, only 33% of adults with disabilities in Florida are working. Of those who don't work, 39% say they would like to be employed. But people with intellectual and developmental disabilities often have trouble finding appropriate work or employers willing to hire them. STARability works as a matchmaker between those seeking employment and employers who can use their skills.

One of the ways the organization accomplishes this is through the Trailblazer Academy. Intended for adults 22 and older, the program offers community-based skill development, which helps them with both life enrichment and their vocational aspirations. The Junior Trailblazers is for ages 14–21, and our son, Nathan, recently joined. We've been proud, grateful, and amazed at how he's flourished within the program. He has been making items like bracelets and candles to sell at the STAR store on 10th St., and we've seen him develop skills we never expected.



There is an extreme need, and the waiting list for STARability's services is long. The more funds raised, the more people the organization can assist.

We're thrilled to announce that tickets to the gala have sold out, but you can still get involved. The organization is accepting donations to support the STARs participating in the programs, and you can partake in the gala's online auction from home. They will also be livestreaming the event online. You can give, watch, or learn more by visiting [E.GiveSmart.com/events/nhY](http://E.GiveSmart.com/events/nhY).

At *The Law Offices of Marc L. Shapiro, P.A.*, we're proud to be active members of the Naples community and give back as often as possible. I'm also endlessly proud of Holly for all of her hard work as a STARability co-chair. I fight so hard for my clients because Holly and I have had to fight so hard for our family. In whatever way I can, my goal is to restore dignity, independence, and quality of life to all of our neighbors who need help.

*Marc L. Shapiro*



# Celebrate Valentine's Day With Your Little Sweethearts



Valentine's Day isn't just for adults. Let your kids know they are the most important loves in your life with these sweet, inexpensive ideas that the whole family can enjoy! Your children will remember these traditions for years to come.

## Make a special Valentine's Day breakfast.

Guess what? Pink pancakes, pink milk, and even pink eggs are a thing! With strawberry milk, food coloring and strawberries in the pancakes, and food coloring in the eggs, you'll have an effortless and special breakfast for the little ones.

*Tip: Set the table the night before after the kids go to bed to make serving Valentine's Day breakfast easier the next morning.*

## Create Valentine's Day cards for each kid.

Tell your children all of your favorite things about them with their own personalized cards. There are so many ways you can get crafty with construction paper and glitter. Your kids are sure to love getting mommy-made or daddy-made one-of-a-kind valentines.

## Bake Valentine's Day goodies together.

What's better than baking with your little ones? If you are short on time, you can find premade dough, usually with a Valentine's Day theme. Or, you can try out your skills with heart-shaped cookie cutters and sprinkles. It can get messy, but it's certainly worth it!

## Wrap up a small Valentine's Day gift.

Whether it's a Valentine's Day outfit, candy, a teddy bear, or a necklace, it doesn't have to be big or costly! Your children will enjoy feeling the love, and they'll be excited to get something new. Don't forget to have fun with the wrapping! Most stores have Valentine's Day gift bags and wrapping paper around this time of year.

Your baby valentines have stolen your heart — make sure they know it by spreading the love! Happy Valentine's Day!

# Has Your Child Suffered a Birth Injury?

## HOW TO PROVE MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

The birth of a child should be one of the most joyous experiences of any parent's life. Unfortunately, a birth injury can inject fear, worry, and stress into the otherwise blissful occasion. Birth injuries are more common than most people realize. Out of every 1,000 babies born in the U.S., 6-8 have a birth injury.

There are many types of birth injuries. Some of the most common include broken bones, spinal cord injuries, and cerebral palsy. Other common injuries can cause scalp swelling (caput succedaneum), nerve damage (brachial plexus injury), and loss of blood flow and oxygen to the brain (hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy). Signs of birth injury include an infant requiring CPR after delivery, swelling or soft spots on the head, floppy or stiff muscles, seizures, and the inability of the infant to move one side of their body.

Not all birth injuries are anyone's fault. Some happen due to premature birth or lengthy labor. But many birth injuries are preventable and occur because of medical staff's negligence. When this happens, the family may have a legal case for medical malpractice.

Unfortunately, proving a child's birth injury resulted from malpractice is not an easy task. First, the parents will need to demonstrate a patient relationship with the defendant via medicals and bills,



establishing a duty of care. Second, they will need to prove that the medical professional breached that duty of care. Plaintiffs usually accomplish this via expert testimony from other medical professionals.

Third, the plaintiff will need to show that the breached duty of care was the actual cause of the birth injury. Proving causation can be tricky, as defendants generally argue the injury would have occurred regardless. Again, the plaintiff will need expert witnesses. Finally, they will need to prove the damages resulting from the birth injury, including medical expenses, permanent disability, pain and suffering, and more.

The attorneys at *The Law Offices of Marc L. Shapiro, P.A.* are experienced in dealing with these cases and know how to compile the expert testimony needed to win. If you believe your child has been the victim of a birth injury, call us at (239) 649-8050 or visit our blog at [AttorneyShapiro.com/blog](http://AttorneyShapiro.com/blog) to learn more about how we can help.

# We've Made the Law Firm 500

AS ONE OF THE NATION'S FASTEST-GROWING LAW FIRMS!



**AWARD  
WINNER**

*The Law Offices of Marc L. Shapiro, P.A.* is proud to announce that we have been named one of the fastest-growing law firms in the nation for 2021. The Law Firm 500 list is compiled annually and awarded to businesses based on their gross revenues over the previous three years. The award aims to honor growth, strategic vision, and a determination to succeed. *The Law Offices of Marc L. Shapiro, P.A.* has been named the 67th fastest-growing law firm with 118% growth.

We could not have accomplished this feat without the incredible work of our staff and the loyalty of our clients. Thank you for your referrals, reviews, and overall support. We are not done growing, and we aim to make 2022 our biggest year ever!



## VEGAN RED VELVET CAKE

SHARE THIS LUSCIOUS RED VELVET CAKE WITH YOUR SWEETHEART THIS VALENTINE'S DAY!

*Inspired by LovingItVegan.com*

### Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup white granulated sugar
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 cup soy milk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1 tbsp distilled white vinegar
- 1 tsp red food coloring (gel works best)
- Frosting of choice

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F and grease baking pans of choice. Line bottoms with parchment paper. (Two 8-inch round pans work best.)
2. In a large bowl, sift flour and mix in sugar, baking soda, salt, and cocoa powder.
3. In a small bowl, combine lemon juice and soy milk. Leave the mixture to sit for about a minute so it can curdle into buttermilk.
4. Add milk mixture, vanilla, oil, vinegar, and food coloring to the flour mixture, stirring well to break up large clumps.
5. Pour batter into pans and bake for 20 minutes.
6. Cool cakes completely before frosting with icing of choice.

## Word Search



BEADS  
CHOCOLATE  
FESTIVAL  
FOOTBALL

HISTORY  
LUNAR  
PINK  
PRESIDENTS

SWEETHEART  
TIGER  
VALENTINE  
VIOLET

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# Improve Your Health With Fitness Trackers

Over the past decade, wearable technology has seen an incredible boom. Wearables like Fitbits and the Apple Watch used to be nothing more than glorified step counters. Since their debut, though, fitness trackers and wearables have gone through various updates that have made them essential to the fitness community as a whole. This is because wearing a fitness tracker can add great benefits to your lifestyle and can even improve your daily life.

### Heart Rate

A built-in heart rate sensor is possibly the most vital feature available in almost every wearable device and fitness tracker. There are many exercise machines that track your heart rate, but those are only useful if you know your resting heart rate. With a fitness tracker — whether you're sleeping, sitting, running, or exercising — you will know exactly what your heart rate is and what's normal for you. This is important because it will help you notice irregularities so you can better understand your heart health.



### Sleep Monitoring

Many fitness trackers give you insight into your sleep routine and will even track your movements so you can find out if you were tossing and turning all night. Others go further by detecting your body temperature, heart rate, and energy expenditure. You can use this information to create a sleep schedule that works for you or make any adjustments to your sleeping conditions if they are preventing you from getting a good night's sleep.

### Future Updates

Fitness trackers and wearable devices are still a relatively new technology. Tech companies are continually updating them and introducing additional features. For example, new wearables that are hitting the market can track blood sugar, which could be incredibly beneficial to those with diabetes. Wearable tech will continue to evolve — only time will tell what features and functions companies will unveil next.