

The Crib Sheet



Mothers and More Chapter 230

March 2009

Mothers & More Mission

Mothers & More is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the lives of mothers through support, education and advocacy. We address mothers' needs as individuals and members of society, and promote the value of all the work mothers do.

Our Website

<http://www.momsofwestchester.com/>

National Website

<http://www.mothersandmore.org/>

If you are interested in joining Mothers and More, please send an e-mail to newmemberinfo@momsofwestchester.com.

Chapter Board Members

Book Club Coordinator- Abbie O.
Chapter Meetings & Discussion Events Planner- Whitney B.
Game/Wine Night Coord.- Dana Z.
Leader (co-leader wanted)- Robyn V.
New Member Coord.- Meredith Z.
Newsletter Editor- Bridget B.
Playgroup Coord.- Dana Z.
Public Relations Coord.- Camille M.
Special Events Coord.- Rebecca R.
Treasurer- Laura P.
Website Coord.- Christine M.

Notes from your Co-Leader Robyn V.

Holiday Spirit

I want to recognize the women in my playgroup for their generosity of spirit. They truly inspire me! Kara G. and Bobbi S. organized two great events for our playgroup during the holiday season. Instead of a Holiday mom's night out, they arranged for us to donate our time and money to women in need. We each used the money we would have otherwise spent on a night out, to purchase gift baskets for the women at the Samaritan House in White Plains. We gathered at Bobbi's over wine and snacks, and spent time putting the baskets together while talking and laughing. Kara and Bobbi delivered them the next week.

They also found a way to share some of the joy we get from our cute kids. We held playgroup at Fun Craft in Scarsdale, where the kids decorated Ornaments and then danced in the back room. Then, during the next playgroup, we took the ornaments, some cookies, and the kids to Meadowview at the Wartbrug in Mount Vernon, where kids distributed the ornaments and spread a little Holiday cheer amongst the residents. Bobbi and Kara's thoughtfulness and planning added true holiday spirit to our year.

On a National Level

This year our chapter was able to donate \$500 back to the Mothers and More National Organization. We should all feel good about contributing to the work of Mothers and More! Laura, our treasurer, shared a beautiful letter she received from Joanne Brundage, the Executive Direction of Mothers and More thanking our chapter for this contribution. "Contributions such as yours help ensure that we will continue to be able to support our chapters, our members and our mission, and secure a brighter future for women and their families." All of us in M&M Chapter 230 made this donation possible. Thanks!

Robyn V. has a son, Joseph, 22 months, and is looking for a co-leader!

Welcome New Babies!



Congratulations to all the proud parents! (If your baby is not listed here, please email Bridget for inclusion in the next newsletter.)

Amelie Abril, born 4/08 to Audrey G.
Emma Isabelle, born 8/08 to Ally C.
Christina Maria, born 10/08 to Jean S.
Matthew Noah, born 11/08 to Jena G.
Adam Cooper, born 12/08 to Kate B.
Avery Sophia, born 1/09 to Sarah P.

Playgroups



Chapter 230 has many wonderful playgroups, mainly organized by year of birth. We also have two Saturday groups and occasional all-ages playgroups. If you are interested in joining a playgroup, please contact Dana Z.

Meredith Z. is also starting a support group for moms with children with special needs. Please contact her if interested.

Stitch & Bitch



Due to lack of interest, the regular Stitch & Bitch meetings have been canceled. ☹

Letter from Your Editor

To quote a great past newsletter editor, "What a difference a year makes." Last year at this time, I was waiting for my baby girl to arrive and trying to teach big brother Maxwell (unsuccessfully) to be more self-sufficient. Now I am making plans for Lila's first birthday, chasing two kids around, and watching with awe and tears in my eyes as the two of them interact. I think I have finally adjusted to being a mom of two. There's really no way to prepare yourself for the juggling act of meeting an infant's (loudly proclaimed) needs while your older one clamors for your attention. About the time you start to get the hang of it, baby 2 starts moving and it becomes a whole different ball game. I truly believed that the second child would, by necessity, be an easy-going baby who would go with the flow. Apparently she didn't get that memo - we have no wallflower here. But in retrospect, of course, I'm glad. She has personality and spunk, just like her brother.

This time of year is often tough for many of us- we're tired of winter, but spring is not yet here. Some days I feel hopeful- spring is right around the corner! And on other days, the gloominess and cold get to me. Unfortunately, 'what a difference a year makes' also applies to our economy. I know that times are tough for many of our members who are struggling with job loss and financial worries. I don't have any answers, just couldn't write this note without acknowledging that.

If there is a way that our group can help support you, let us know. If you have extra time on your hands, join the board, or just help with one event that allows us to enjoy our children, our blessings, and some adult interaction. If you have an idea to make our chapter even better, share it with us and help us make it a reality! We may be losing a few board members soon, so we really need some new faces. I hope everyone will attend our upcoming Chapter-wide events, such as our Mom's Night Out and our Earth Day celebration. Let's come together and keep getting to know each other.

In the meantime, hang in there. Spring will come, both physically and metaphorically.

Bridget B., mom of Maxwell, 2.5 years old, and Lila, 10 months

Game Night/Wine Tasting



Game night/wine tasting night is SO much fun! It's moms getting out of the house once a month to have a glass of wine (or 2-3) and to play a game (if you want). If you don't like playing games, it's fun to just hang out, relax and meet other people in the same boat as you. We usually have about 8-10 moms attend. Please join us next time!

Book Club



Book Club is held on the first Friday of every month at 8PM. Our last meeting, which about 12 people attended, was on February 6 at Erika R's. We discussed *The Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri, a book of short stories. Some of the stories were set in India, others in the United States, and all involved characters of Indian heritage. We discussed the way their culture and age affected each of the female characters, and how the situations they faced, from unhappy marriages to civil war, transcend their culture and age.

The next meeting will be on March 6 at 8PM at a location to be determined. The book will now be *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer. If anyone would like to host, please let Abbie O. know. We will discuss *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell at the April 3 meeting at Kristine S's house in Scarsdale.

Welcome New Members!



Welcome to the new members (and their offspring) who joined us recently! We are so glad you have joined our chapter.

Ally C. and her daughter, Emma (8/08) live in Pleasantville

Amy M. and her son, Alex (10/07), live in Hartsdale

Audrey G. and her daughter, Amelie (4/08) live in New Rochelle

Belinda F. and her son, Christopher (01/08), live in Yonkers

Debra J. and her sons Lucas (8/04) & Matthew (1/07) live in Tarrytown

Jean S., and her daughter, Christina (10/08), live in Chappaqua

Kathleen G., and her son, Gavin (07/08), live in Yonkers

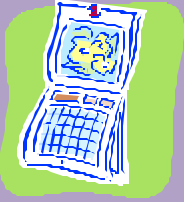
Lisa M. D. and her son, Thomas (02/07), live in White Plains

Stephanie M. and her son, Justin (09/07), live in Tuckahoe

Tina L. and her son, Peter (11/07) live in Scarsdale

Upcoming Events

(contact is listed after the event)



March 12- Event Planning Meeting (Robyn V.)

March 13- Leapin Lizards Day (Christine M.)

March 19- Speaker Night: Kids Protection Planning with law firm Gavett + Gavett. Designed to educate parents on how best to protect their minor children. (Whitney B.)

April 24- Speaker Night: Emotional Freedom Therapy with Silvana Leggiero (Whitney B.)

March 13th – Mom's Night Out (Robyn V.)

Moms, you work hard. You deserve a night off. Join your fellow moms for a little conversation, wine, cheese, and laughter-without the little ones! Barb C. has graciously offered her home in West Harrison from 7-10pm. If you are new to our chapter, we would love to meet you and start putting some faces to names. Please come by, whether you have time to RSVP or not.

Gym Review

Hanadi T., mom of Charli, 16 months, reviewed a few gyms for us. Here is what she had to say:

Once my daughter turned one, like many of you, I started looking for a gym that would allow her to exert some of this newfound energy. My first concern was cleanliness, followed by fun and cost. Here are a few that I tried and what I thought of each.

1. YMCA (Rye): The facility itself was clean enough- let me clarify what I mean. It was not clean enough that I would let her eat a Cheerio that fell on the floor, but clean enough to allow me to avoid the heebie-jeebies. I learned that all Y's are not priced the same way. For example, the White Plains Y has very different (cheaper) prices than the Rye Y. So if you are deliberating on a class at a Y and you have the option of going to 2 different locations, definitely compare the prices. As for the "fun" factor, I thought that they had enough to entertain her for 30 minutes at the time, but now at 16 months I do not think she would be as entertained. They have a number of structures (slide, rolling wheel, big giant ball), as well as small balls that they bring out at the beginning of class. There wasn't too much structure to the class; the teacher would demonstrate things to do on each apparatus, but it wasn't a structured class. Overall I thought it was a good bang for your buck, but not something that I would RAVE over.

2. JW Tumbles (14-B Rye Ridge Plaza Rye Brook - 914-251-0555): Now this place is CLEAN. You can tell that they scrub everything at the end of each day, because everything looks brand new and I know that this place has been around for a while. The classes are broken down by age group. Throughout the class, they incorporate singing & physical activities (tumbling, jumping etc). One of the things I liked about the class was that they were constantly bringing out new things for the children to try. For example, they have swings which attach to the ceiling and each child can have a turn on a different style swing (airplane, tee-pee style, truck). After about 10 minutes with the swings, they take them down and bring out a kiddie pool filled with balls of all shapes and sizes. Next is gym stations where they set up mini obstacles for the child to get through. There are also two slide/gym combos that the kids can roam through at any point. It runs on the pricier side (about \$350 for a session of 10-12 classes).

Other places I looked at but was not able to try yet:

- Gym Mini Kick-it - (Harrison)
- <http://www.brucechung.com/gymminikickit.html>

I would rate it as clean as JW Tumbles, also seemed to have more of a structured class.

- Great Play (Scarsdale)
- <http://www.greatplay.com/scarsdale/index.html>

This location only opened last summer so everything is relatively new. Prices seemed to be more affordable than JW Tumbles.

**Place review:
Stepping Stones Museum in
Norwalk, CT**

I can't believe I've lived here almost two years and we only made it to Stepping Stones last week. What a terrific place! It is a children's museum about 35 minutes away from our New Rochelle home. I was surprised at the cost- only \$9/pp (under one is free), compared with \$12 or so for those indoor play areas which are much less fun and educational! Stepping Stones has a toddler area which is not overly exciting for a 2.5 year old, but it was good for a few minutes. It does have a nice isolated area for infants so they don't get trampled by the big kids.

The main exhibit area is for slightly older kids, but Max still enjoyed a few exhibits there. The piece de resistance, of course, is the water room. Could that be any more fun? It's a huge room filled with different structures allowing water (and boats, balls, and sea animals) to flow freely. They provide plastic smocks, but thankfully, Toby L. suggested we bring a shirt to change into. My advice is- bring a whole outfit (shoes too! Or better yet, wear rain boots. Even if your child is careful, there are bound to be some 'splashers' there). We loved the café- it has a great children's menu and a large seating area where we saw many families who had brought their own lunches (there's even a microwave). It looks like a lovely place in the summer as I think you can go outside, and there is also a great playground nearby. But good luck getting them out of the water room! Enjoy.

Bridget B.

What's your favorite nearby day trip?

No need to do any research on outings this spring: it's all here for you.

Please note: many locales were mentioned more than once, so we included the response with the most detail. Thank you to everyone for responding!

My day trip favorite, Stone Barn agricultural center in Pocantico Hills (<http://www.stonebarnscenter.org/>). It's a wonderful farm with breathtaking views of the hills around. You can go on a tour or go off on your own to see the various animals they have. The best part for me, though, is the cafe with its all natural food selections. Some really delicious stuff there! *Rebecca R.*

My favorite nearby trip is any of the Hudson Valley historical sights. Our favorite is Phillipsburg Manor, especially when they have special events. Try the children's authors day in Sept at Sunnyside. Clifford and many other characters are there with many children's authors for book signings. Over Memorial Day, Van Courtland has animals and acrobats. I first took my son at 2 years old. He is now 8 and still loves it. *Laurie Ann V.*

My daughter's favorite place for a day trip is the Bronx zoo (<http://www.bronxzoo.com/>). We bought a family membership, which is well worth the money. *Lichiou C.*

The Botanical Gardens
The Atlantis Aquarium in Riverhead
The Children's Museum in Paramus, NJ
The Stamford Museum and Barn - my son loves this place - we had his birthday there last year.
The Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport
The Bergen County Zoological Park in Van Saun park - great zoo, little train ride, carousel, pony rides, great playground and cheap!
The Bruce Museum in CT *Jessica W.*

We recently went to the Hall of Science in Queens. It was close (less than 1/2 hour). It was amazing. I think Owen (2.5) was a bit young, but still had fun. Charlie thought it was fabulous. It's not for children, necessarily, but had lots of things kids could enjoy -- wind blowing balls, different experiments with light, etc. There is a toddler area -- that was the worst part, I thought. There's food there too, or you can bring your own. It's just different and fun. *Toby L.*

One of my kid's favorites is the Norwalk Aquarium. It's about 30 minutes away, on the Long Island Sound, and is just the right size for little ones. It has lots of fish- big and small- sharks, seals, penguins, turtles, frogs, etc., and usually one or two special exhibits. The octopus they have is usually not hiding, which I've found to be fairly rare in an aquarium. It also has an IMAX theater which usually has a few movies showing, some nature-focused and others not. There's also a play area for kids 5 and younger, although my 6 year old has

SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, April 26

Chapter 230 Earth Day Celebration at the Greenburgh Nature Center!!

Let's come together to celebrate our Earth and the arrival of spring (we hope!). This will be a fun event for the whole family.

been known to sneak in and have fun too. Stepping Stones is not too far away if you have the energy to see both, and there are some good restaurants nearby too. *Abby O.*

We love going to Bear Mountain (in the good weather!). We went there a lot before my son was born, and now he loves it too. We go picnicking and rent rowboats. They also have a little zoo, as well as an antique carousel. It is a lot of fun. *Tara J.*

I like the Rockefeller State Park Preserve a lot. Very nice walks! <http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/info.asp?parkID=60> *Monika H.*

On a rainy or cold day, we like Stepping Stones Museum for Children in Norwalk (www.steppingstonesmuseum.org) and Muscoot Farm (www.westchestergov.com/parks/MuscootFarm.htm) on a warm day. *Andrea N.*

Bear Mountain State Park
(<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/info.asp?parkID=55>)
Activities: Hiking to the Tower, Ice skating, Picnicking, Boating
Also nearby (hard to describe where exactly it is without looking at a map) you can wait (sometimes long wait!) for the freight train to come by. My boys love it! 100+ car freight train rumbles by within 5 yards.

The Croton Dam
([http://village.croton-on-hudson.ny.us/Public_Documents/CrotonHudsonNY_WebDocs/Historical Society/CrotonDam](http://village.croton-on-hudson.ny.us/Public_Documents/CrotonHudsonNY_WebDocs/Historical_Society/CrotonDam))

Skiing (I will not call it a resort, but certainly the closest one around here so it's perfect for weekly lessons): Thunder Ridge
(<http://thunderridgeski.com/>)

The closest ski "resort" (less than 2 hrs): Catamount
(<http://www.catamountski.com/>) and ButterNut
(<http://www.skibutternut.com/>)

Camping: Beaver Pond Campgrounds - Harriman State Park
(<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/parks/info.asp?parkID=57>)
(*This comprehensive list is from Laura M.*)