

multiple Connections

SUPPORT
EDUCATION
RESEARCH



- Research Roundup
- Focus on Affiliate Members
- Welcoming Quads in a Pandemic

multiples
OF AMERICA

CONNECTING + SUPPORTING MULTIPLE BIRTH FAMILIES
(Also known as the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs)

multiple Connections

The purpose of Multiples of America is to cooperate with medical and educational professionals engaged in multiple birth research, increase the understanding of child development and rearing especially relating to multiple births, and to increase the awareness of the individuality of each child. Founded in 1960, this organization is nonprofit and all donations are tax deductible.

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Cover Photo: Lindsay, Meredith and Charlie Collett enjoy a day in the snow. Their mom, Lora Collett, is a member of MultipliCity-Delaware Valley Families of Multiples Club.

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RIDING FOR THE BRAND...WITH BRENDA ROSER



New Year, New Outlook, New Hope!

Each year on the ranch brings positives and negatives. However, one thing remains the same no matter what: we face things as a “family” or as a “team” – good or bad. We ride together! When things are a bit tough, we help where we can, we take up the slack when needed, and we cinch up our belts until better times come along. Obviously, this past year has been a rough one for all, no matter your location.

We face much uncertainty; we aren’t sure what this new year will look like or when this pandemic will end. Although it does look like there may be light at the end of the tunnel now with a vaccine, the timing and roll out are not solidified. We are tired! We have faced health scares and hunted for TP, sanitizer, masks and COVID tests! But just as our “team” on the ranch tightens down to ride together during the storms, our multiple birth families do as well!

You may or may not be aware that multiple birth friends have shipped supplies to other locations for families in need of supplies, at their own expense. Multiple birth families sent food to others in need. They provided support across the miles to families that lost loved ones or are still recovering from the virus. Multiple birth families sent care packages to other multiple birth families losing incomes and supported local multiple birth small businesses through takeout/curbside opportunities whenever possible. Other multiple birth friends continue to check on those sequestered at home with weekly Zoom calls for encouragement.

No family is immune to the impact of this virus, and we can see it would be easy to succumb to depression, anxiety and fear. Yet, as multiple birth parents, we have a unique support system **like no**

other! Are you taking advantage of that support during these trying times? This does not require you necessarily meet in person because there are a number of other ways to explore in supporting one another and those in your community.

Think back to those early days of sleep deprivation and trying to manage more than one baby at a time. For some of us, I realize that was a bit longer than for others, but we can all remember it was, quite frankly, OVERWHELMING at times! Yet a quick call from a fellow mother of multiples could boost your view just enough to make it through another day or two. It doesn’t matter if you have newborns, three year olds, elementary-age multiples or teenagers – just knowing someone else understands and cares, can give us a boost to keep marching forward, especially in these days of isolation and quarantine! Perhaps your club can come up with some type of check-in system – it’s free and all can participate.

Does your club have a Facebook page? I encourage leaders to “set a tone” of hope and cheerfulness through a daily post. It’s been shown positives we take in can impact our viewpoint and uplift spirits. Maybe ask a question that could provide positive discussion such as, “What was your favorite childhood memory” or “What do you like best about our club”? Or even, “What do your children like best about our club”? This can generate some positive and heartfelt mood lifting discussion for sure. Some of my girl’s favorite childhood memories are with their multiple birth friends, and we still laugh about them today!

Try random “angel drive-bys” – make cookies, make a handmade card with a sweet message, share a gift card, perhaps a bottle of wine, or send an uber meal to someone in your club. Depending on your situation you can choose to be very economical or splurge a bit – whatever you decide, no contact is required and your children will love the “surprise” element. You may want to coordinate through your club leadership to avoid duplication, but what a fun surprise for the recipient! Perhaps it could become an annual Valentine event for your club.

Take a walk or go for a bike ride as a family. Fresh air and a change of scenery can do a world of good for our attitude and outlook. Plus, it helps our children

to run off some steam, and oftentimes helps us focus better afterwards!

Schedules are often needed in families with multiple children but remember in times like these, sometimes schedules should take a back seat to the immediate needs, feelings and concerns of the family. While we know our multiple birth parents have superpowers, even super heroes take a break to refuel and refocus sometimes. Be patient with yourself! Try to keep things simple and allow some flexibility as you learn what works for your family and their new schedules during these unprecedented times. Ask your multiple birth cohorts what is working best for them and implement any tweaks that may help your family as well.

Do you have older children missing their multiple birth friends? Have Zoom play dates or encourage them to become pen pals! Kids love to get emails/mail, and what a fun way to help them stay in contact with their friends. It could be something as easy as a picture or send a dot-to-dot or puzzle page they could do together on a Zoom call. Another way to be supportive of family or folks in your community is by sending pictures or notes to older folks who are isolating to stay safe from the virus. This is a great way to teach kindness too!

Tough times are far from over, but we can certainly find ways to try to mitigate the frustrations, the anxiety, and move forward as positively as possible. Your Board of Directors is working hard this term to find ways to keep a balanced budget despite the many challenges this virus has escalated. Folding clubs, declining numbers and a financial deficit create a very bleak picture for the organization. We are scouring every possible avenue to look to the future and increase viability.

One simple way you and your club members can help: buy our merchandise! We recently launched an online store and will have additional open dates for ordering again later in the year. This was at no cost to us and a great way to help offset smaller expenses. Let us know if you have a preference on future items to be made available for ordering.

Our second annual Giving Tuesday was a benefit for both our EDGE and Scholarship committees. A big **thank you** to all who participated! Your donations are appreciated. We continue to have a donation button on our website if you wish to donate at any time throughout the year. Any amount is welcome and appreciated.

Multiple Birth Awareness Month is in April, and we plan to have our first ever "Multiples Walk/Run in the Family" virtual event, along with a number of additional ideas for your local clubs and communities. Be watching for more information soon.

Additional fundraising events are being explored, and hopefully we may be able to find a good "fit" for implementing in the near future. We will share any information with our member clubs as it becomes available.

Also, some of our clubs have been asking for ideas for Zoom calls and Facebook discussions. WE HEARD YOU! We are excited to launch a new "Topics" section for Club Leadership. We have begun developing, and will be sharing very soon, some information for your club leaders to share or utilize for your club's members and convenience. Each topic will be announced on the Facebook Leadership Page and can be located on the Members Only section of the Website for downloading and use. Make sure your club is a part of this dynamic Facebook group, so you don't miss out on our announcements!

Even when things seem the darkest, if we hang on, we can often find the positives. Together is the important part of hanging on.... if we are together, we can make it through!

As we go to press for this issue, I find myself still basking in the glow of my new role as Nonnie to my first grandson! While many shared becoming a grandmother would "change your life," "there's nothing like it," and "it is the best gig ever," those statements couldn't prepare me for the joy at seeing him for the first time! I was quite shocked at how quickly he had me wrapped around his tiny little finger. Oh, we are going to have good times ahead for sure. And then to watch your child begin her own parenting journey, it truly is surreal. Time continues to march on and a new generation is born – amazing really!

Looking into this tiny face instills hope and despite the many negatives, the ongoing pandemic our nation and the world continues to face, I choose to see the blessings of being a part of this great organization and how it has helped me become the woman, mother and grandmother I am today. Reach out to your multiple birth friends – check on them, encourage them and "ride together" through these last days of COVID-19. *Together we can make a difference – Let's Ride!*

Research Roundup

By Amy Bredemeyer
Research Vice President

Multiples, most commonly twins, have proven very valuable to researchers for a variety of fields. In recent months, several studies have been published that used twins as subjects or even focused on twins and their unique experiences.

A large study in the Netherlands to examine how genetic factors affect food preferences included 16,541 adult multiples and their family members. The researchers found strong genetic links with fruits and spices, as well as fish (that one only in male subjects), but not in the other food clusters (meat, vegetables, savory snacks, sweet snacks, and drinks). Investigation in this area could lead to insight regarding why it is easier for some people to make healthy food choices, and better inform clinicians on ways to approach diet-related disorders.

Vink JM, van Hooijdonk KJM, Willemsen G, Feskens EJM, Boomsma DI. Causes of Variation in Food Preference in the Netherlands. Twin Res Hum Genet. 2020 Aug;23(4):195-203. doi: 10.1017/thg.2020.66. PMID: 32885771.

The relationship between alcohol and mental health is frequently studied from new angles, and the backdrop of the current pandemic brought forth a fresh approach for researchers at the Washington State University. More than 3,900 adult twins participated in an online survey to examine if stress and anxiety were associated with changes in alcohol use due to COVID-19. About 14% of the respondents reported an increase in alcohol use, and the overall finding suggested that those with a higher level of stress and anxiety were more likely to report an increase in consumption.

Avery AR, Tsang S, Seto EYW, Duncan GE. Stress, Anxiety, and Change in Alcohol Use During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Findings Among Adult Twin Pairs. Front Psychiatry. 2020 Sep 25;11:571084. doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2020.571084. PMID: 33088277; PMCID: PMC7544945.

That same set of researchers also analyzed survey results regarding how pandemic mitigation strategies have affected an individual's perceived change in physical activity or exercise and its association with mental health. They found that those experiencing a decrease in physical activity did have higher levels of stress and anxiety, but the findings were not significant after controlling for age (older twins were more likely to report lower levels of anxiety) and gender (females were more likely to report higher levels of anxiety).



Duncan GE, Avery AR, Seto E, Tsang S. Perceived change in physical activity levels and mental health during COVID-19: Findings among adult twin pairs. PLoS One. 2020 Aug 13;15(8):e0237695. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0237695. PMID: 32790745; PMCID: PMC7425865.

Reviewing information to find different correlations is not uncommon. Another recent publication evaluated old medical charts to identify predictors and outcomes of conversion to Cesarean delivery in a planned twin vaginal delivery. A total of 725 candidates for vaginal delivery were identified, and of the 237 subjects who delivered twin A vaginally, only 10 needed to deliver twin B via Cesarean. This information could be key to medical centers considering twin deliveries in labor and delivery rooms rather than operating rooms, which have become a standard protocol in many hospitals across the country.

Mei JY, Muñoz HE, Kim JS, Szlachta-McGinn A, Blat C, Rao R, Han CS, Irani RA, Afshar Y. Rates of Cesarean Conversion and Associated Predictors and Outcomes in Planned Vaginal Twin Deliveries. Am J Perinatol. 2020 Oct 8. doi: 10.1055/s-0040-1718368. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33032326.

As the pandemic continues, researchers around the world continue to design studies to learn more about COVID-19 from medical, psychological, and sociological perspectives. Twins Research Australia is using twins and parents of twins in that country to look at "Knowledge, Experience, Reaction and Resilience" as a result of the pandemic. From a more medical viewpoint, the Finnish Twin Cohort has teamed up with the Danish Twin Registry to examine "genetic and environmental determinants of methylation patterns of key genes involved in the host response to COVID-19 infection." Lastly, in Italy, a longitudinal study was launched in February 2020 to follow twins' COVID-19 positivity rates as linked to immunological phenotyping. Be sure to keep your eyes open for opportunities to participate in twin research when possible!

Club Spotlight

By Jen Gardner

On November 9, 2020, the **Saddleback Mothers of Multiples Club (CA)** celebrated their 50th Anniversary. Half a century of providing support and friendship to mothers of twins, triplets and quadruplets living within the Saddleback and Capistrano Valley areas of Southern California!



The club had hoped to celebrate this milestone in person, however they held a small gathering for several past presidents of the club and state representatives from Southern California Mothers of Multiples Club (SCMOMC), along with a live broadcast to the community to mark the occasion.

“Most of our club members were not even born when the club was established. It’s fantastic that 50 years ago, these ladies had the foresight to rally together to support each other on the journey of raising multiples, as it can be a totally different experience than with a singleton, the name given to a baby born singly,” said Sidra Aronowitz, current Saddleback president and mom to six-year-old fraternal twin girls and a nine-year-old son.

With close to 200 current members, this non-profit organization was established to connect mothers of multiples through educational speaking events, family

events, mom nights out, seasonal parties, an invitation to all state and national club events, online support forums, a community philanthropic program (Helping Hands) and even a dedicated buy/sell/swap site.

Saddleback is a highly social and supportive club. “I joined for the support and camaraderie of managing life with multiples, but stayed for the friendship and fun, and also to help support the new multiple moms who join,” explained Celeste Bowden, board member and mom to eight-year-old boy/girl twins.

The club was founded on February 17, 1970, by Sharon Figeira Wright, June Kemper Vogel and Jill Sauffer Henderson. The club was originally called Saddleback Mothers of Twins Club, but changed the name in August 1992 to incorporate triplets and quadruplets. For more information on Saddleback Mothers of Multiples Club, visit www.smomc.org, email smomc@smomc.org, or call



Marketing VP Celeste Bowden at (949) 391-8342.

Shown left to right: Terry Buchanan (Southern California Mothers of Multiples Club State Representative), Jen Gardner (Past President, Saddleback Mothers of Multiples Club 2014), Celeste Bowden (Saddleback VP of Marketing), Jan Huculak (Saddleback Past President, 1994), Wendy Leonard (long-time Saddleback member), Donna Savely (Saddleback Past President, 2004), Carla Hall (State Representative) and Sidra Aronowitz (current Saddleback Club President).

LGBT Support

By Heather Dougherty
LGBT Coordinator

Did you know that Multiples of America hosts a private Facebook group for LGBT parents of multiples and parents of multiples that identify on the spectrum? We do! While it’s still in its infancy, please join us online to discuss issues related to parenting multiples as a LGBT parent or parenting your LGBT multiple(s). The more, the merrier, and the more interactive the group becomes.

I’m thankful to live in Louisville, KY, one of the two “blue islands” in Kentucky, but as a parent of multiples who identifies LGBT, I’m a trailblazer here. The few other families I know did not originally see the need for “multiples” support or LGBT parent support, but it’s not about what makes us different from other parents of

multiples ... it’s how we can support each other through similar parenting challenges we can face.

As we navigate the school system (our twins are six and in first grade) and the medical system (our girl twin is a severe asthmatic), we have questions that our parent friends can’t answer. What are the laws in your state or the process to secure parental rights for the non-biological parent? Where and who are the “family-friendly”, “multiples smart” resources in your community? What are good picture books to share that reflect YOUR family?

These are goals I have for our online support ... resources we can build together, to support each other. Please join me and interact. If you have suggestions for our monthly discussion topic, please email me at lgbt@multiplesofamerica.org.

Executive Function...What's That?

By Kim Simonich
Special Needs Coordinator

What exactly is executive functioning, and why is it important to develop in children? Executive functioning is the mental process that enables one to plan, focus attention, remember instructions and juggle multiple tasks successfully. The brain needs this skill set to filter out distractions, prioritize tasks, set and achieve goals, and control impulses. Children are not born with these skills, but they are born with the potential to learn them. The process of developing executive functions begins in infancy and continues into early adulthood. There are many activities that can be done with children at different ages to boost their executive functioning skills.

Children from 6 to 18 months can play lap games like Peekaboo, Pat-a-Cake, or any others you may know. These games exercise working memory, and they also practice self-control skills as they wait for the adult to reveal themselves. These games are a great way to challenge working memory as the children need to locate the missing object. They can copy or imitate adults/caregivers, do fingerplays or have conversations with others. Simply talking to babies is a great way to build their attention, working memory and self-control.

Children from 18 to 36 months enjoy games that involve language. Children during this stage of development are rapidly expanding their language, and it plays an important role in developing executive function. Language helps them to understand and follow rules that begin to get more complex, and following multi-step directions becomes critical to this development. Games like Follow the Leader and song games, such as The Hokey Pokey, that involve movement are fun at this age. This is a great age to introduce matching and sorting games that involve their planning skills.

Children from 3 to 5 years old benefit from imaginary play, storytelling and gross motor movement games and quiet games. Their executive function skills grow at a rapid pace during this age period. Younger children still need lots of support while learning rules and conventions. As the children become more independent, try to gradually remove the adult supports. Movement songs that involve long lists of things to remember help them with their working memory.

Children from 5 to 7 years old benefit from games that have rules that can be played at different skill levels. Card games and board games are excellent ways to develop working memory. Songs that repeat and then add on challenge the working memory. Children at this age become more independent so puzzles and guessing games are favorites, and they can develop attention to detail and flexibility.

Children from 7 to 12 years old need games and activities that increase in their complexity so they can continue to expand their executive functioning skills. Organized sports become extremely popular for many children during this period. Music, singing and dance offers opportunities to develop attention, self-monitoring, and working memory. While some computer games provide practice, they should be monitored.

Adolescents are still in need of developing their executive functioning skills as they are often expected to have skill levels of adults. Goal setting – along with planning and self-monitoring of those goals – is critical at this stage. Teenagers need guidance in setting goals and developing the plans to attain the goals. One technique that is helpful is self-talk. Some multitasking can be good for developing their executive functioning, but too many distractions can be detrimental. Activities that focus on continual improvement and challenges also are beneficial. Developing their study skills at this point are essential for them to be successful in school, and later on, in the work world.

Developing executive functioning skills can begin in infancy and continue until the individuals are young adults. Many activities that seem like play are in fact developing executive function skills in children, and they are essential for creating and maintaining supportive, healthy relationships.



IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR THE MARGE AINSWORTH SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL TERM

Are you, your spouse or your multiples continuing your education? If you answered yes, then you should apply for the Marge Ainsworth Scholarship.

All members of Multiples of America and their spouses and multiple children are eligible for the scholarship. To be eligible, an applicant must fill out an application form, which can be found on the website.

- *Multiples Scholarship:* A multiple birth child of a member in good standing of a member club or Affiliate of Multiples of America for at least three (3) years preceding submission of application.
- *Parent of Multiples Scholarship:* A member in good standing of a member club or Affiliate of Multiples of America for at least three (3) years preceding submission of application.

Applicant must be enrolled, or plan to enroll, in an accredited educational institution or program of training and may be a university, college, junior college, trade or vocational school.

Recipients will be announced at the 2021 Multiples of America convention in San Antonio.

Any questions should be sent to scholarship@multiplesofamerica.org.

What do you need to do?

1. **Sign into the Member's Only Section at multiplesofamerica.org. Click on the tab that says Ainsworth Scholarship.**
2. **Download all the applications and guidelines.**
3. **Complete and email (or mail) before the February 1, 2021 deadline.**
4. **Consider donating to the scholarship fund. Complete the form located on the website.**

It's that simple!

Focus on Affiliate Members

By Christy Helvajian
Affiliate Member Coordinator

If I told you that Multiples of America has unlimited potential for new members, would you believe me? I am confident if we begin to recruit **Affiliate Members** that membership will begin to grow in record numbers!

Multiples of America has offered Affiliate Membership for at least a decade, but as an organization, we have never really recruited members in this category. In our current environment, not being able to meet in groups or face-to-face, I think it is the absolute perfect time to bring on new members who can appreciate virtual access to our organization's resources.

Who qualifies as an Affiliate Member?

- Parents of multiples with no local club
- Family member of multiples (such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, siblings)
- Professional service provider to multiples
- Your multiples' teachers, school administrators or other educational personnel
- Your multiples' daycare providers
- Your adult multiples
- Friends of your family
- Former club members who want to be connected to the organization

Essentially, anyone who is connected to multiples or has an interest in multiple birth can join Multiples of America as an Affiliate member. Think of the possibilities!

I recently had the pleasure of connecting with a new Affiliate Member from the Northeast. She reached out to Multiples of America *on her own* and is now a member. Coincidentally, she also has triplets, but was never a member of a local club. During our hour-long conversation, this amazing woman shared that she is a labor/post-partum doula and a social worker. We talked about ways she could be involved with the organization and resources she now has access to as an affiliate member. Imagine the kind of "advisory board" we could build with dynamic new members of this caliber. As the organization offers resources to others, they can in turn offer expertise as well.

Although Multiples of America will always be a club-based organization, I think it benefits every member to be a bit more inclusive by welcoming new affiliates. We need to start viewing Multiples of America as any other non-profit, such as an environmental organization. When you join The Sierra Club, for example, you are really giving the organization a donation, with no expectation of meetings or having to fulfill any obligation to them. Affiliates can join with the attitude of holding membership but not having to contribute their time; gaining access to research and other resources, but not having to manage the organization. Multiples of America grows, the Affiliate makes a new connection, and the organization receives a bit of income. That sounds like a win-win to me!

How can you help? Challenge your club members to refer one or more affiliates to the organization. Sponsor one or more affiliate members. Gift a membership to an adult important to the lives of your multiples. **This is your chance to really share the magic of Multiples of America with others.** We are holding a membership drive specifically to increase Affiliate memberships through January 31, 2021. Go to: <https://multiplesofamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/MOA-AFFILIATE-MEMBER-APPLICATION-2020-2021.pdf> to access the Affiliate Member Application. If you're recruiting a new Affiliate Member, please remember to put your name in as the referring member. The top three members who refer the newest affiliates to the organization will be featured in an upcoming issue of this publication, on Multiple Messages and on the Facebook page.

If you have any questions about the membership drive or ideas on how to increase membership in the Affiliate sphere, please contact the Affiliate Member Coordinator at affiliates@multiplesofamerica.org. We look forward to your ideas and enthusiasm as we grow our Affiliate Member base!

Knowing Where to Look

By Rachel Thomas
Reporter

As a child, I was rather good at standardized tests. The area I was always good at, though, was a section of the test that asked, “where would you look to find the answer.” I always thought it was weird – it did not ask you to answer the question, it asked you where you would look to find the answer. It might say “If you wanted to know the capital of Alabama, where would be the best place to look? A dictionary? An encyclopedia? An atlas?” They were not trying to measure if you knew the capital of Alabama; they were trying to measure if you knew where to find the answer if you did not know it.

As a kid, I did not understand the point of this section. I was used to standardized tests measuring knowledge, but was this really measuring knowledge? In school, books and notes were not allowed during tests. So why was the standardized test asking us where we would look up the information?

As an adult, I now appreciate what these questions were asking. I do not have all the answers, and I know I never will. But if I know where to look, I can almost always find the answer I need. As a parent, I don’t have all the answers. But what standardized tests taught me is that sometimes it is just as important to know where to look.

Just the other night, I received a call from a friend in my club saying, “I need an answer to my question right away, and I knew you would know.”

As I thought about it, I realized my local club has become one of my sources to find the answers to things I do not know. Sometimes, people are asking for advice about raising twins. It was a fellow twin mom (and teacher) who suggested, in the age of COVID-19, maybe it would be easier if my twins were in the same classroom this year. Sometimes, questions are just about life. Last week, I heard one twin mom say to another twin mom (who works with animals), “I can never thank you enough for recommending a good veterinarian for my dog.” Our fellow club members

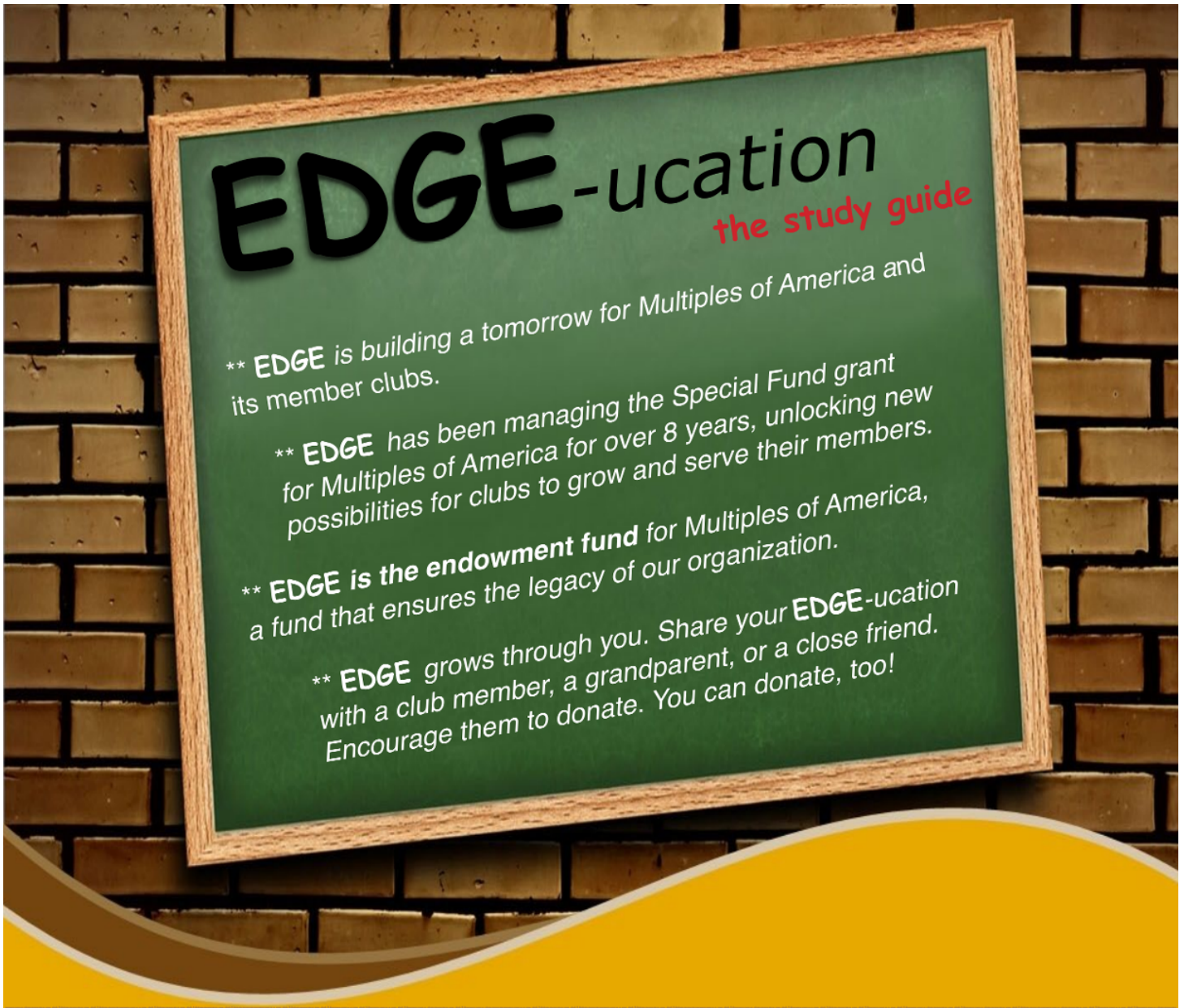
have become a resource when we do not have all the answers.

My Multiples of America friends have now become a resource too. If I decide to go on vacation to California or Florida or New England, I know who to call for



recommendations. If I need help advocating in my state’s legislature or knowing what kind of wine to buy, I have friends I can turn to for advice. And if I need help being a leader or planning a convention with attendees from across the nation, I have a seemingly endless list of mothers of multiples who have done it before and can offer some tips!

Some would say, “Why not just ask Google?” The standardized tests asked for the “best” place to look for the answer. Google could answer any question I throw at it but having a list of “experts” I know, and trust is invaluable. That is where I will find the “best” answer!



EDGE-ucation

the study guide

** EDGE is building a tomorrow for Multiples of America and its member clubs.

** EDGE has been managing the Special Fund grant for Multiples of America for over 8 years, unlocking new possibilities for clubs to grow and serve their members.

** EDGE is the endowment fund for Multiples of America, a fund that ensures the legacy of our organization.

** EDGE grows through you. Share your EDGE-ucation with a club member, a grandparent, or a close friend. Encourage them to donate. You can donate, too!

**Donate with debit or credit card
or download a donor form for donation by check or money order
by visiting www.multiplesofamerica.org**



EDGE also welcomes alternative ways of giving, including: life insurance beneficiary designations, bequests in a will, traded securities, and retirement plan assets. Contact the Multiples of America Executive Office by email, info@multiplesofamerica.org or by phone (248-231-4480) or the EDGE Chairman, edgechm@multiplesofamerica.org for more information about planned giving donations to EDGE.

**All donations to the EDGE Fund are tax deductible.
Multiples of America aka NOMOTC is a 501(c)(3) organization.**

Welcoming Quads...In A Pandemic

By Jill Heink

Higher Order Multiple Coordinator

As we go to press, Covid 19 continues to threaten our health and disrupt our lives. Many workers who decamped their offices to work remotely are still at home. Some businesses, gathering places and sports venues are open to a limited degree, but it is scatter shot and not a good idea in some places. The school year has started up, after many months of shutdown, but it looks very different from the calm days of 2019.

It is always challenging to be a parent, and for parents of triplets, quadruplets and more, you can multiply that challenge by 3, 4, 5 times and so on. But here are two astounding stories of higher order multiples families rising to the challenge of this unprecedented time in big ways!

On March 11, Taylor Becher and Lance Thompson of Albertville, MN, became parents to **spontaneous identical quadruplet girls**. What are the chances? Several different news articles listed the odds from 1 in 11 million, up to 1 in 13 million! But give or take a couple of million, the numbers came up, and Sawyer, Kennedy, Lakely and Aurora were born just shy of 32 weeks gestation, with weights between 2-3 pounds. Coronavirus was closing in, but both grandmothers were able to be at the hospital for the delivery, and most importantly, so was their dad. Just a few

days later, the hospital limited to one at a time, even for parents.

Taylor shared with *CafeMom*, "It's been hard in the sense that both parents can't visit at the same time. And no other visitors are allowed [other than parents], so their older brother hasn't even seen them yet either." Happily, the quads were safe and healthy through their NICU stay, and all were home by early May. Now they chronicle their adventures on their Thompson Quadruplets Facebook page.

The incredibly rare happened again, just a few days later! Jenny Marr and her husband Chris became parents to **spontaneous identical quadruplet boys**, Henry, Hudson, Harrison and Hardy. The quads were born at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas at 28 weeks gestation on March 15, just one day before mandatory and social distancing regulations went into effect in Dallas county. According to one of the staff obstetricians, there were only 72 documented cases of spontaneous monozygotic quadruplets - ever! The quads weighed about 2 pounds each and spent 10 weeks in the NICU. They did great and came home in May. Interestingly enough, both parents are only children, but they seem to have gotten into the spirit of such a momentous occurrence. You can check out adorable photos of their boys on Jenny's Instagram @themarrthemerrier.

Congratulations to these families on such amazing and precious destinies, and best wishes for continued health, happiness and lots of help!

Book Review

By Susan Stump

Resource and Publication Coordinator

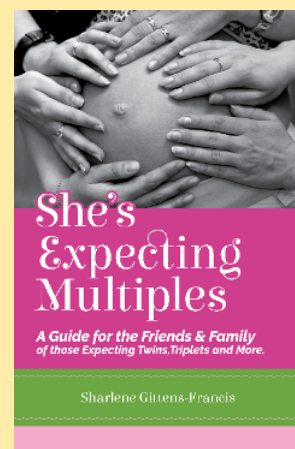
She's Expecting Multiples - A Guide for the Friends & Family of those Expecting Twins, Triplets and More

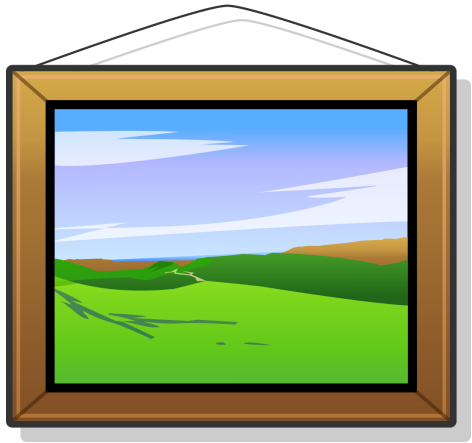
by Sharlene Gittens-Francis

She's Expecting Multiples - A Guide for the Friends & Family of those Expecting Twins, Triplets and More is a great resource for anyone wanting to help someone who is expecting multiples. The author includes some background and facts about pregnancies and births of multiples, and shares the emotions she experienced during her own pregnancy and the birth of her triplets. She covers many topics with specific suggestions as to how to aid the expectant Mother of Multiples (MoM) emotionally, socially, physically, financially, with physical appearance, and organizationally throughout her pregnancy. Some suggestions are: questions to ask (and not to ask), what not to say, how to help her with nutritious meals and snacks, how to be a "helpful substitute" (doing chores and

running errands), and gift ideas for the expectant MoM (to pamper her and to make life easier once the babies arrive). Also included are practical ways to help the expectant MoM while she is on bed rest and when the babies are brought home. The appendixes contain perspectives about multiple birth pregnancy, lists of questions the expectant MoM may have about herself and her babies, baby shower tips, buying tips, and a registry checklist. There is also suggested reading, a bibliography, and lists of support groups and websites with information for MoMs.

Sharlene Gittens-Francis BSc., MBA is the mother of triplets (two daughters and a son). She has worked in sales, project management, business development and market research in Trinidad and Tobago. She is currently fulfilling many roles in one of her "biggest projects of her life-Raising her Triplets." *She's Expecting Multiples* is available on Amazon (\$14.99) or Kindle (\$9.99).





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In Memory Of...

by Carla Hall
Bereavement Support Coordinator

Benita Goodheart, former member of Act Two MOMS (CA) passed away at age 68 from Covid-19 on October 14, 2020, after fighting a valiant battle for 39 days. Her firm beliefs in the Lord and devotion to her family helped her during this tough time. She had a love for animals, mastered several instruments and excelled in other artistic talents. She is survived by her husband Paul and children, Damion, Adrian, twins Kyle and Corrine, and Luke, as well as 17 grandchildren. Benita became a nurse in 1990 and, in 2003, decided to become a traveling nurse. In 2020, she decided to retire and pursue travel adventures with her husband. She loved quilting and excelled at it; at her funeral, there were numerous quilts that she had made. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Susie Jorgensen, former member of Double Delights of Denver (CO) passed away on November 14, 2020, after battling a long-term illness of lung disease. She had been waiting for a lung transplant. She is survived by her husband Steve and two sets of twins, Hans and Shanda and Inga and Margaret. Susie was a Senior Structural Engineer for more than 30 years. She will be remembered for her tremendous dedication to her work, sharing her knowledge and expertise, her infectious smile and her dancing. In her spare time, she enjoyed cooking with her husband, quilting and spending time with her family.

Eileen Miller, Past President of NOMOTC, passed away on October 6, 2020, after a long illness. She is survived by her husband Don, daughter Barb, granddaughter Devann, and four great grandchildren. Eileen was preceded in death by her twin sons, John and Richard. She had 60 years of service, having held many elected as well as appointed positions. She was active in state and local clubs, being a member of Mountain States Mothers of Adult Multiples (AZ) at the time of her passing. She was also active in scouting, Sunday school and was a swimming instructor. She also worked for 26 years for the City of Tucson, Parks and Recreation, Senior Division. Her sense of humor was a trait that will be missed by many. Cards and donations to the Multiples of America scholarship fund were given in her name.

Landon Jackson Brian Prudhomme, infant son of Jennifer and Brian Prudhomme was born September 1 and passed away on September 2, 2020, from unknown causes. He is survived by his parents, twin brother Eric, and sister Nicole. His mother, Jennifer, is a member of the Greater Nashua Parents of Twins & More (NH).

Multiples of America, a.k.a. NOMOTC, strives to provide a small amount of comfort to families during the difficult times that follow the loss of a loved one. The effect on each family member regarding the loss of each and every loved one varies widely. Our bereavement materials have suggestions on how each individual can work through the grieving process. With the addition of social media, more information on passing's have come to light, so if you hear of someone who has suffered a loss, please contact us.

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