



*The coordinated outfits worn by members of Flamingo Mothers of Multiples didn't disappoint during the Saturday evening Derby party at convention, which was held on the rooftop of The Brown Hotel in downtown Louisville, Kentucky.*

## COMING UP

September 30  
Dues renewal deadline

November 1  
Group exemption deadline

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**multiples**  
OF AMERICA

CONNECTING + SUPPORTING MULTIPLE BIRTH FAMILIES  
(Formerly the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs.)

support  
education  
research

# Building Our Story

By Mary Adcock  
President

Following is the message shared by Mary Adcock upon her installation as 2024-25 President of Multiples of America.



Thank you, Terri Gillis and Kim England, for a wonderful installation. Thanks to each of you who are here at convention for all for your work and discussion in our general session today and for the work you do day by day for national and on the local and state levels. And now, for another strange beginning to a speech.

I just love those Hallmark Christmas movies. They are often set in some small town with a ski chalet. And just imagine, perhaps the leading lady is a widowed mother of triplets who brought her kids to the chalet to recapture the joy of a special holiday. Then our mom of three meets the owner of the chalet, who happens to be single and, of course, handsome. Let's imagine he's played by Tyler Hynes (or consider Tom Cruise if you're not familiar with Hallmark land).

Those triplets get into all kinds of antics during their stay at the chalet. And once the handsome chalet owner spends more and more time helping them and their mom, the triplets are changed and find their way to helpfulness. Of course, sparks also start to fly between the couple.

And one evening as the triplets are helping the owner build a fire out on the chalet's patio, Tyler says to the kids ... *it's one of those memorable Hallmark moments* ... he says, "You know, it only takes a spark to get a fire going."

*Oh, those Hallmark moments, so cheesy!* Well, you can probably imagine the rest of the story, and by now you're wondering, why in the world is she leading with this fantasy?

But there's some truth here, you know. No, it's not that Tyler Hynes is handsome, though that's true (*and he's actually just wrapped up filming a Hallmark movie in my hometown of Kansas City*). It's the saying. It's one of my favorite song lyrics actually, "It only takes a spark to get a fire going, and soon all those around will warm up in its glowing."

I feel like Multiples of America has sparked a lot over the last two years as the board and volunteers and local clubs have worked to regroup, recover, and regrow. We've accomplished ...

- Monthly Zoom Connects
- A *Multiple Connection* publication filled with articles about families and parenting, all available in one click
- New and updated resources about club management and education of multiples
- Social media posts that shine and amaze
- A Connections Corner
- Monthly press releases that spread our message to the world
- New research initiatives
- Increased fundraising opportunities
- Increased donations and sponsorships
- A return to an in-person convention, and the list goes on...

It didn't happen in a vacuum. It took the tireless efforts of our Executive Director. It took the time and talent of board members and National Worker volunteers. It took each of you joining in, sharing your ideas and concerns, telling your

MULTITALES. Those were **some sparks**, and that's certainly something to celebrate. But now we need to continue building ... **Building Our Story.**

In many ways, it's the same story that started 64 years ago. It's a story of support and connection. But over the years as times have changed, we've been challenged to push forward, to uncover new ways to tell that story, new avenues of support and research.

So how do we keep building? What can we put on this year's blueprint to make our mission come alive for today's members and the next generation?

**We can work on 'Building Volunteers.'** The Ambassador Program you just heard about is a start. It's a chance for members to make a big difference with just a few hours of time. We still need those members who can commit to being full-term National Workers, but we're also looking for members who only have time to:

- Write one article for *Multiple Connections*
- Commit to contacting 10 people or businesses to let them know about our fall giving campaign
- Suggest a topic for a research study, then write the first 10 questions to get it started

And the list goes on. I can see that our Ambassadors will make a big difference with just a few hours of time.

Even as we embrace the idea of micro-volunteering, we also need to look at ways we can build leaders for our clubs, for our states, for our national board. What we really need is a leadership pipeline for local, state, and national volunteers, a way to encourage members who are considering stepping into leadership roles, to help them gain confidence, to offer ideas for growth and chances to collaborate with others. Since we're talking about building our story, perhaps we could even call it a Leadership Academy.

Writer John Maxwell says good leadership is about "advancing your team." I believe we need to spend time this year working to build and strengthen our leadership pipeline.

How else can we keep on building our story? **We can work on 'Building Clubs.'**

We continue to grow ways for our current clubs to interact with our national organization. The aim is to chip away at that old myth that group exemption status is the **only** reason to belong to national. Someday, I'm going to challenge a club to list five or maybe even 10 reasons other than group exemption to belong to national. Could you?

Our Research and Membership Development department would be ready to help with that answer. In recent years, they've worked to check in personally via email with each club. We've also added new resources for clubs, with our most recent being a New Member Toolkit, plus our monthly Zoom Connects continue to grow. Last year, we held several learning-focused Zoom Connects that seemed to be a big hit. Look for more of those and more membership-focused Connects in the next year. Perhaps some Connects focused on self-care for busy parents, fundraising tips for clubs, freebies for non-profits, a Digital Marketing Boot Camp part 2, or just something fun like a Paint & Sip. And if you have a topic for a Zoom Connect, let us know.

We've also transformed something. It's the old Member Club Procedure manual. We now have an updated Member Club Manual. It's information to help National Representatives and club leaders grow their understanding about the structure, resources, and policies of Multiples of America. The manual will be emailed to club representatives in three parts over the course of this term, a kind of step-by-step instruction guide.

We also need to continue to build our supports for those parents who contact us wanting to form a new club. Perhaps we can consider a personalized mentoring process to spur on more of these parents to take that next step.

Along with building clubs, **we can work on 'Building Connections with Members ... and Prospective Members.'** We've been ramping up our ways to connect with individual members beyond our annual convention — through social media conversations, like Ask the Community posts on Facebook, Special Delivery quizzes, and now the opportunity to join in a Multiple Match.

We're also planning to work through state organizations to connect with parents who are in non-member clubs. They're already involved in a club; we want to let them know all that we're building here in the national organization. Some state organizations are already doing a great job with this; we want to expand on that.

We also need to continue to think about how we can build up ways of connecting with parents at all ages and stages, with parents living in underserved or rural areas and with those needing support in Spanish. Is there a way to bring these parents into our current clubs or can we help them in structuring clubs online or over the phone?

We've even received some inquiries in the last year from grandparents looking for resources and connection. In fact, one of my cousins just became a grandparent of twins. Do we have supports, resources, and information that would be valuable to them? Perhaps that's a build on for another day, but it's a question to consider.

Ready for more plans in the Construction Zone? **We'll be working on 'Building Support for the Organization.'**

We've always said that we're an organization supported by member dues, donations, and grants. When I was on the board 20 years ago, though, we didn't really have to think much beyond dues. Today's story is different. Making ends meet financially is difficult in today's world for families and for nonprofits. Our lower membership members also present a challenge. So, as our Finance Vice President, Missy Khan, explained earlier today, we've looked over all the nuts and bolts of the budget, cutting costs wherever possible. Then we've started building an increase in fundraising, donations, and sponsorships. Now we plan to expand on that.

Speaking of fundraising, we've certainly made the most of raffles and auctions here at convention. And just wait until you see what the Events team has in store for tonight! But we're also building in more year-round fundraising to support general expenses, like the Raise Right project and the MonkeysRead online book fair.

We also plan to continue building our fall giving campaign. To begin with, setting a theme and goal for the campaign, and sharing with donors specific ways in which each dollar matters. Our Finance Vice President also plans to utilize the Give Butter online platform for this fall's campaign. Some of you used it when paying for Timeless Treasures last night. This will expand the ways in which donations can be made while minimizing costs for processing fees.

Another important revenue stream is a gift that keeps on giving. That's recurring or monthly donations, which create a steady stream of revenue for an organization. Studies show that nonprofits who promote a recurring giving program can rake in as much as 50% more annually. We'll explore building a Support Squad for Multiples of America, donors who can pledge to give just \$10, \$15 or \$20 to the organization month after month. One member has already set up monthly giving through her workplace, and recurring giving is already possible through our website as well.

*Anything else here?* We'll continue working on **'Building Our Brand'** through monthly press releases, added connections with social media influencers, and a focus on forming partnerships with professional medical associations. That seems like a lot of building. Will it all fit on our blueprint?

- Building Volunteers
- Building Clubs
- Building Connections with members and prospective members
- Building Support
- Building Our Brand

What is this...looks like we're building a skyscraper, a gas station? Oh no, I see it now...it's a chalet, there's the mountains, the quaint patio with the fire pit. We can't do it alone, you know. Remember that widowed mom of triplets? She took that trip to the chalet and met the handsome owner who sparked a solution. That story made me realize each of us can be that spark for Multiples of America. *It only takes a spark, you know.*

*You heard about Raise Right today.* That idea came from a member from Illinois who added a note to the end of her Special Delivery quiz...saying, "Have you heard about?" *Yes, it only takes a spark ... to get a fire going.*

*Have you noticed the "Ask the Community" questions* that come through our social media accounts a couple times each month? More and more members have been answering those questions and starting discussions. That idea came from the same member from Illinois who then sent several questions to get us started. *Yes, it only takes a spark ... to get a fire going.*

*I mentioned Zoom Connect topics for next term.* A member from New Jersey has already sent in several ideas for topics that would connect with her club members and another member from New Jersey has offered to host one of our

Connects. Those are all listed on the sheet the board will use for planning our Zoom Connects for next term. *You know, it only takes a spark ... to get a fire going.*

*Have you enjoyed getting to use your credit card to pay for silent auction items here at convention? An Events team member asked if that was possible. Yes, it only takes a spark ... to get a fire going.*

*Had you heard that several donations for our giving campaign last fall came from people who worked at a Scott's Miracle-Gro plant? One of our members in California who works at the plant found a way for her company to include Multiples of America as one of their end-of-year giving partners. I'm thinking, she knows it only takes a spark ... to get a fire going.*

*Did you know the next issue of the Northwest Association of Mothers of Multiples club's newsletter will have an article about Multiples of America? The non-member clubs can get a taste of what's new with our national organization. The idea came from a member in Washington state, and you can bet we'll be checking in with some other state organizations to see if we can do the same. Yes, it only takes a spark ... to get a fire going.*

Now some might say, that's great and all, but **I'm not good** with new ideas. Well, it's not just about new ideas. It's also about believing in our mission, and **being the spark** that shares the message ...

- about the resources available
- about the value of joining in research
- about the value of making connections
- and the power of belonging to a club

Can you pledge now to **be that spark**? Can you pledge to **be that spark** to that mom down the street who just had triplets? *Share the news about your local club.*

Can you **be the spark** for a friend who belonged to your club 10 years ago, but didn't rejoin once her twins entered high school? *Share the news that your club still needs her (and she still needs your club).*

Can you **be the spark** to the health professional at your local medical clinic? *Share information about the resources of Multiples of America and about affiliate membership opportunities.*

Can you **be the spark** to a business professional in your hometown? *Share information about our sponsorship and advertising opportunities.*

Can you **be that spark**? A year from today, what do you want to be celebrating for your local club or state organization? What do you want to be celebrating for Multiples of America? **One guarantee:** If we go together, we can go farther.

Can you **be the spark**? Can you help us **continue building our story**?

*It takes more than a hammer and nails ... It takes time, talent, patience, ideas.*

*It takes a board and volunteers who are willing to dream, to think out of the box, to create a blueprint.*

*It takes you to step up to volunteer for local clubs and state organizations and national.*

*It takes members who take the time to check through our mailings, share news about new events or resources, join in a Zoom, donate a dollar.*

*It takes you and you and you ... and your club members at home and our clubs not represented here.*

Can you **spark an idea**? Can you **be the spark**? Can you help us **continue building our story**? After all, as the old song goes,

"It only takes a spark to get a fire going  
And soon all those around will warm up in its glowing"  
That's how it is with multiples clubs  
Once you've experienced them  
You find support that brings you strength  
"You want to pass it on."

*Let's have a year of making our mission come alive, of sparking new growth and possibilities, of passing on the power that comes through connection, resources, and research.*

# Three Times Twins are Triple the Work

By Ali Dunn

Affiliate Member

I always wanted to be a mom. I always wanted to have more than one child. But I was never one of those people who wished for twins. When I found out I was expecting twins, after 3.5 years of infertility, I was certainly excited (and nervous).

Parenting twins is a unique and interesting experience. I am frequently amazed by the relationship my identical twins share.

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*It truly is twice the giggles, cuddles, and love. And yet these two children sometimes feel like more than two times the work.*

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Here are three instances when my twins feel like triple the work.

## At bedtime

Yes, my twins get along really well and entertain each other during the day...which I am so thankful for! But this often backfires at bedtime. You would think two people who spend the majority of each day together would look forward to a little alone time at night. But that is simply not the case. They have the excitement and energy of two best friends having a long-awaited sleepover, every single night.

## When they are not on the same schedule

Any twin parent will tell you that getting your twins on the same schedule is vital when they are infants, especially when it comes to sleep. I can still remember the feeling of anxiety that would start to arise when one baby was soundly napping and the other baby was still awake. I knew that one unsynchronized nap could throw my whole day, and certainly my night into chaos!

## When they are going through a transition

Two singleton children, no matter how close in age, are not going through the same life stages simultaneously. Potty training, transitioning from the crib, and teething are so much harder when they happen times two. And if a set of multiples are your only children, then you have the hard task of getting two children through a transition, without the perspective of being a second time parent.

While I really enjoy parenting twins, I will be the first to tell you that two kids don't always add up to two times the work. But as any twin parent will tell you, the love is multiplied as well.



Ali Dunn is the founder of **Me Two Books** and the author of four children's books: *I Was a Premie Just Like You*, *I Needed the NICU Just Like You*, *One of Two, a Twin Story about Individuality*, and *The Career Explorer*. She is also the creator of an e-course about Career Exploration.

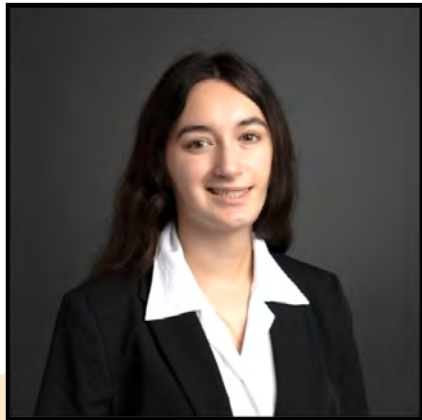
Ali is the chief mom officer of identical twins born at 28 weeks. You can learn more about her books at [metwobooks.com](http://metwobooks.com) and connect with her on her [blog](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

## Marge Ainsworth Scholarship Award Recipients

*Compiled by the Scholarship Committee*

Multiples of America is pleased to announce that we had three recipients of the Marge Ainsworth Scholarship for the 2023-2024 term.

### Elizabeth (Ellie) Romero



Elizabeth (Ellie) Romero is receiving a \$500 Marge Ainsworth Scholarship this term.

Ellie is a triplet daughter of Maria Guadalupe Calderon-Romero and Ruben Romero. Her mother, Maria, has been a member of **AWEMOMs Moms of Multiples Club (CA)** for 20 years.

Ellie is a current student attending Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her goal is to become an astronaut. She is in the MIT's Aerospace Engineering program. Her desire as a future astronaut is to get humans on Mars and use her platform to advocate for women and other underrepresented groups in STEM, which are goals she has already begun working toward as a student. Congratulations, Ellie!

### Natalie Erin Jones



Natalie Jones is the twin daughter of Anna and Tyrone Jones. Anna has been a member of **Beyond Kids and Family (MO)** for 15 years. Natalie is receiving a \$500 scholarship.

Natalie graduated from Osage High School in Osage Beach, Missouri, in May of this year. She graduated with a class rank of 10/154. Natalie was active in high school and was given many awards and honors including All American on the Dance Team 2022-23 and 2023-24, Academic All State in Softball 2022-23, National Honor Society 2021-24, and Academic Letter awardee all four years of high school. Natalie has also been involved with many committee service projects throughout her years in high school.

According to Natalie's reference letters, Natalie is "brilliant multitasker taking on part-time jobs, thriving as a student athlete and being an outstanding asset on the drumline."

Natalie will attend the University of Oregon — go Ducks! — and will study to become a marine biologist. Natalie Jones is a very worthy recipient of the Marge Ainsworth Scholarship. Congratulations to Natalie and best wishes as you begin your next adventure at Oregon!

## Miranda Renee Hellman



Parent recipient Miranda Renee Hellman has been a member of the **Northern Nevada Mothers of Twins Club (NV)** for five years. She has five-year-old twin boys. Miranda is receiving a \$300 scholarship.

Miranda is a full-time medical student pursuing a career in family medicine at the University of Nevada, Reno. Her dream is to become a primary care physician to provide continuous quality care to her patients.

The director of Student Affairs at the University of Nevada, Reno, had this to say: “Her greatest strength professionally is likely to be what I imagine is her greatest strength personally — a seemingly never-ending supply of empathy and compassion for those around her. From going out of her way to warmly welcome new staff members like myself, to supporting new medical students in their challenging first few weeks of medical school, to ensuring each of her 70 classmates receives a personalized card on their birthdays, Miranda always finds a way to make those around her feel special and seen. Future patients will be fortunate recipients of her thoughtful care.”

## It’s time to start thinking about applying for the Marge Ainsworth Scholarship for the 2024-2025 term.

The Scholarship Committee will award scholarship(s) to either a parent of multiples who is active in a local club or a multiple birth child of an active club member. The deadline for the upcoming year is February 1, 2025.

The [information and forms required when applying](#) for either of the scholarships are on the [website](#) under the Members Only Section. Applicants should email their completed application forms and attachments directly to [scholarship@multiplesofamerica.org](mailto:scholarship@multiplesofamerica.org). Scholarship recipient(s) will be announced in July.

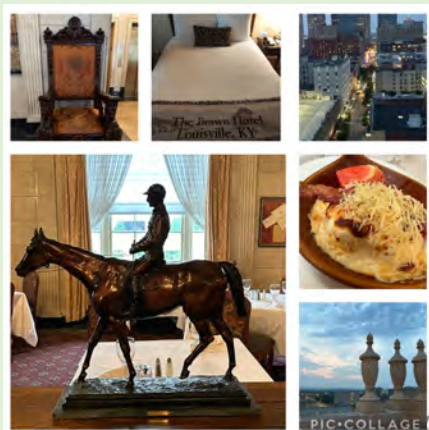
Please make sure that your membership dues are sent into the Executive Office each year from your local club. One of the requirements for this scholarship is that the member (applicant or parent of multiples applying) needs to have been a continuous member for the past three years. Be sure to check with your local club treasurer to ensure your dues have been paid prior to applying for a scholarship.

If you have questions regarding the Scholarship process, please contact the Scholarship Chair at [scholarship@multiplesofamerica.org](mailto:scholarship@multiplesofamerica.org).





## Convention Overview: Connecting in Kentucky



By *Claudia Contreras*  
*Communications & Marketing Vice President*

Click — You have completed your precheck. Yay!

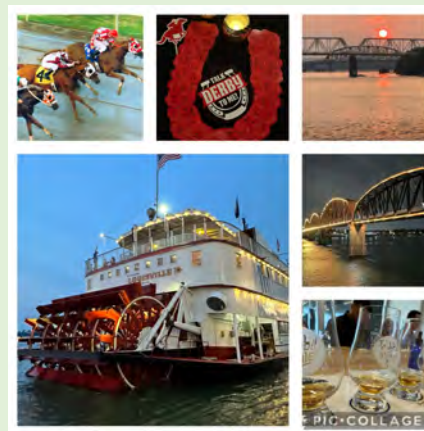
It is the day before, yes, the day before convention. Suitcases are nearly packed. If you are traveling alone, you can't wait to enjoy your "off" time. If the family is coming along, it might be a bit more stressful, and you are probably a little behind on packing but before you know it, the day arrives. Some delays happen, but you make it to convention!

It's late but the uniqueness and beauty of The Brown Hotel with dim lights is still evident.

### Thursday: A Day of Fun

It's Thursday! As you get back from sightseeing some of the amazing areas of Louisville, you learn that others arrived a few days earlier and already visited some of those to-do list locations.

As you come back to the hotel, you cannot wait to check out the Hospitality Room. Tickets are purchased for raffles, and you get to congratulate some of the winners while grabbing snacks, from chocolates to chips, apples and bananas, coffee and water. By then, it is almost 5:45 pm and is time to head to the Belle of Louisville riverboat. Boarding is smooth, and you are talking and enjoying the time with your amazing friends from your club or others you've connected with through the years.



The sun is shining, and the weather is a mix of humidity with dry air. There is a loud horn that announces the departure while you grab snacks, a few drinks, and just chat while observing so much beauty in the city of Louisville. As the wind blows gently in your face, you smile and then, it is time to dance. Yes, there is dancing, landscape, catching up, and laughs. As you dance, you realize that here in Kentucky, you are connecting — connecting to memories and old and new friends. As the beautiful sky covers in gold and orange, you smile once again, thankful for the connection.

### Friday: Keynote Luncheon and More

Yes, Friday has arrived. If you are a first-time attendee, you get to kick off your day early and meet the board members while having the opportunity to learn more about the organization and connect with others.

Then, it's luncheon time, and wow, the details. Mountain States Mothers of Adult Multiples (MSMAMS) of Arizona truly delivered. The tables looked impeccable, and there was a horseshoe ornament for each attendee with outstanding details. President Adcock started the meeting; we had the presentation of the flag and sang the National Anthem. Delicious salad, and wonderful lunch and sealed with the cheesecake.

Then it was time for our keynote speaker, Graham Shelby, a dad of triplets. His speech was heartfelt and full of laughs. He described a journey back to the days, from the fears of pregnancy, to the joy of birth and seeing your multiples grow and realizing how time is a thief. Some tears ran down many cheeks and the heart might have paused from a moment as you remembered the hospital, the questions and perhaps the most beautiful

moment, the bravery of his wife Gabrielle's strength and courage, which you could totally relate to. As he wrapped up, a few key messages stuck with you about balance and forgiveness.

### Friday Afternoon: Workshops

Time flew by and then you head to the meeting rooms for different workshops. The biggest challenge was to decide which ones to sign up for, but by the time you are there you know your schedule and where to go. There is, however, always that latent curiosity of wishing you could attend more workshops. Some got solid reminders on leadership on how important it is to find purpose; others got the chance to go in depth in research about twins and learned more about The Louisville Twin Study. Many got to create fascinating fascinators to wear on Saturday night; some were transported into a meditation journey or got to learn about how to be a career competent parent. Other members discussed an amazing book and got to hear from others about truly impactful stories while sharing a connection from past to present.

### Friday Evening: MoMs Mall and Timeless Treasures

Later, it is time to get some more raffles, giveaways, snacks and get ready to head to MoMs Mall and the Timeless Treasures Silent Auction. It's always surprising and inspiring to learn about the multiple talents from our mothers of multiples, from jewelry to crochet, books, and a lot in between. Talent is an understatement. And then, the silent auction, with gorgeous and unique art pieces or popular electronics. It's always fun to watch the back and forth and healthy, but spicy, competition among friends of all ages. The winners proudly and triumphantly collect their desired items.

### Saturday: General Session, Good of the Order, Memorial Service and More



Saturday is traditionally the main and most important part of convention. It is effective and efficient, but critical. It is a business meeting with delegates receiving their voting cards and volunteers diligently getting ready for their roles.

By this time proposed bylaws have already been shared and discussion or follow ups take place, while the volunteer pages, tellers and minutes approval committee are working hard to perform business to meet expectations. Six motions and nominations later, our Board of Directors and Nominating Committee was selected.

And then, one of my favorite parts of the whole convention: the Good of the Order. At this time, members share news and connect with each

other. It is still to date my favorite thing about this organization — to hear others share the blessings and support that this group has given them through the years. From support through bereavement and difficult times, to building memories that will last a lifetime, is so heartwarming to get to hear from them.

Lunch was all about connecting. Personally, I had the opportunity to learn about how strong some friendships can be. One of the amazing ladies I met does not have a club nearby and had not been at convention since the 90s, but one of the best friends she met back then at convention asked her to join her in a drive and come this year. She did not have to think twice. Here they were at it, more than 30 years later connecting in Kentucky.

You get to learn so much about others, their tribulations, families and children. It never stops amazing me how strong some friendships are within our organization, those friendships surpass geography, time and life changes. After lunch, some attend the Memorial Service to honor and remember those members or family members who are no longer among us.

The second part of the meeting involved installation of the new board, exciting news and programs that will support the organization. The speech from President Mary Adcock invited all of us to be that spark, the spark

to start the connection, the support, the ignition to keep the fire up for our organization. It cannot be denied that her speech brought that fire, that spark, to burn in our inside and inspire us to continue connecting and building the legacy of this organization.

### Saturday Evening: Farewell Celebration, Derby Style



And Saturday night arrives... the connections keep happening, laughs, fun times. All members wearing their fascinators, looking way past good with the beautiful sunset seen from the rooftop over Louisville. It is splendid to see members relax and have fun connections as we battle each other during the live auction to support fundraising.

You hug others and say your goodbyes while wishing for safe travels. All you can think is that it has been amazing to connect in Kentucky. I cannot wait to connect again next year, wherever that is, because my spark to connect is on and will go on until we connect again!



*Past Presidents, left to right: Kim England, Melodie Wisniewski, Kim Ozark, Pam Krell, Terri Gillis, Rebecca Moskwinski, Mary Adcock and Bea Reynolds.*



### **2024-2025 Board of Directors, left to right:**

**Kim England, Parliamentarian (appointed)**

**Dawn Keller, Executive Director**

**Pam Edelman, Research and Membership Development VP**

**Sara Barr, Media & Publications VP**

**Kim Simonich, Events VP**

**Mary Adcock, President**

**Claudia Contreras, Communications & Marketing VP**

**Missy Khan, Finance VP**

**Terri Gillis, Advisor (appointed)**



## Friday Luncheon: Keynote Speaker and More

By Angie Callbeck

Media & Publications Department

President Mary Adcock welcomed attendees to the 63<sup>rd</sup> annual convention, and to the luncheon hosted by **Mountain States Mothers of Adult Multiples (AZ)**. After a delightful meal, keynote speaker Graham Shelby spoke about his experiences of being a triplet Dad to now 20-year-old boys.

He related many humorous stories, including finding triplets on their first ultrasound.

*After discovering three heartbeats, he asked the tech, “Are there MORE?” to which she replied, “Honey, I’m looking!”*



Graham Shelby

He and his wife Gabrielle laughed at many “dumb questions” such as, “Were you part of a fertility study?” and “How were they conceived?” a question they faced while at the deli counter of their grocery store. Graham stated that their stroller was bigger than some of today’s compact cars! And he acknowledged how special it is to have two, three, or more babies.

Graham had three ideas that he would tell himself as a young father:

1. Embrace: your life, don’t endure or accept it
2. Balance: your childrens’ individual identities
3. Forgive: your kids, your spouse, your parents, and let your kids see it

Sponsor Tod A. Lewis, Esq., also spoke to attendees as an advocate for multiples whose credit histories have been “mixed.” Twins often have a Social Security number just one digit apart, and this can lead to credit problems. He suggests checking credit reports often, and contacting him for help if needed at [tod@twinsmixedcredit.com](mailto:tod@twinsmixedcredit.com). He was recently featured on the podcast Twintopia (episode 35).

Mary honored the Past Presidents in attendance and introduced the Board of Directors, thanking them for their service to Multiples of America. National Workers were also thanked, and Service Awards were presented to Diana Knollman, Anna Campbell, Carol Molyneux, and Kim Ozark. Gemstone awards were presented to Carla Hall and Terri Gillis, and Club Members of the Year were also honored.



Service Awards, left to right: Carol Molyneux (20 years), Anna Campbell (20 years), Diana Knollman (10 years) and Kim Ozark (20 Years).



Congrats to our newest Gemstone members, who have volunteered for our organization for 30 years: Terri Gillis (left) and Carla Hall.



## Workshop: Leading With Heart

By Mary Adcock

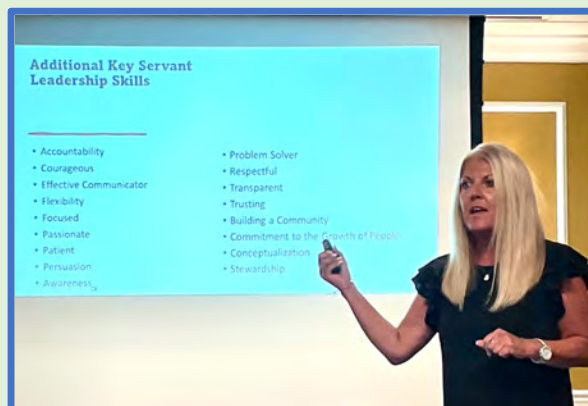
President

Are you hesitant to step up and be a club leader? Wondering how you can measure up to the duties of the membership chair or club president? Lynda Snedeker believes mothers are a perfect fit for leadership. She says moms have a built-in desire to lead, and get lots of experience as we shepherd our kids through the years.

Lynda shared these pointers as a part of the convention workshop, *Building Positive Culture Through Effective Leadership*. A 28-year partner with Texas Roadhouse, Lynda oversees 10 locations and leads approximately 2,000 managers and employees across Kentucky, Indiana, and Missouri. She is also an aunt to twins, Jackson and Jacob.

### Servant Leadership

Some think of leadership as position. Others may strive toward the power in leadership. But Snedeker holds to the idea of servant leadership, and she adds that the first person a leader must serve is herself.



Lynda Snedeker

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**“We must first lead ourselves well before we can lead others,” Lynda said.**

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How does a leader mom serve herself? Lynda recommends moms develop “complete inner centeredness” by finding what grounds them. Grounding might involve deep breathing, listening to music, or petting your family dog. Or it could be actual “grounding” with the earth by taking off your shoes and pressing your toes into the dirt.

“We are all on an independent journey, so it’s whatever works for you,” Lynda advised.

What’s next? That’s hard to determine, according to Lynda, because leadership itself is a journey with no set map. It’s a journey filled with ups and downs, but no endpoint. It’s lifelong. It’s personal.

### Personal Leadership

Personal leadership asks moms to take an accounting of strengths and weaknesses, and to grow in self-awareness of personality traits, values, and anxieties. It takes courage and it starts with commitment, according to Lynda.

Then in guiding a team, Lynda advises, focusing on “leadership with heart,” noting what can happen when you remember to:

- Hold yourself accountable.
- Don’t expect from others what you are not willing to do yourself.
- Self-correct along the way.

- When storm waters come, remember we are each other's lifelines.

"Building an awareness that we are each other's lifeline within our team or family is crucial," Lynda added.

"And if one of you stumbles, there is a full awareness to pick up the slack and carry on, not letting anyone fall or get left behind."

Sure, it has ups and downs and asks for courage and commitment, but in the end, Lynda advised moms to keep walking that leadership journey.

"The world needs great leaders, and needs great mothers more than ever," she said.

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## Workshop: Sound Bath to Relax and Rejuvenate

By Erica Davis

Media & Publication Department

Attending the annual Multiples of America convention is a time to relax and reconnect with oneself and friends. At this year's convention, one of our own moms of multiples, Melodie Wisniewski, Master Reiki and Sound Healer Practitioner, shared her talent and passion for sound therapy.

Each participant entered the room and prepared for their experience by removing their shoes and finding a place on the floor to rest. Melodie was assisted by her twins, Brit and Aprilyn. We were instructed to close our eyes and get comfortable as Melodie and her twins filled our ears and bodies with sounds focused on the different chakras of the body.

Feeling the sound in our bodies created a sense of relaxation that swept over the room as the different instruments accompanied the sound bowls.

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*I felt calm, yet aware, as different sensations rolled through my body.*

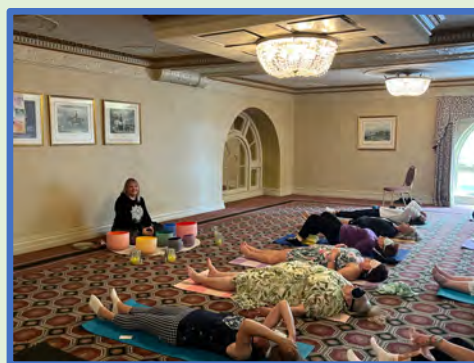
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Others in the room were so at ease from the sounds they fell asleep with occasional snores. Melodie assured our group that falling asleep during a sound bath workshop is a positive reaction, showing that she is setting the right environment for individuals to feel comfortable and release stress.

Once the experience was over, the room felt lighter and more peaceful than when it began. To learn more about Melodie and her work, check out her website at [Harmonic Healing LLC](#).



*Aprilyn, Melodie, and Brit Wisniewski demonstrated the different instruments used during the sound bath workshop.*



*Melodie Wisniewski with the workshop group before the sound healing began.*



## Workshop: Why Study Twins?

By *Becky Hames Leidiger*

*Nominating Committee*

Why do researchers study twins? That was the question addressed at the *Connecting to Research: The Louisville Twin Study – Past, Present and Future* workshop at the 2024 annual convention.

The presenter, Dr. Deborah Finkel, works for the Center for Economic and Social Research of the University of Southern California. She also works with the Institute for Gerontology and the School of Health and Welfare, both of Jönköping University in Sweden. Dr. Finkel shared how twins provide a valuable source of information on health and psychological research since they provide a unique relationship that allows researchers to examine genetic and environmental influences.

Dr. Finkel explained that we all want to know the answer to the questions: Were they born that way, or did the environment shape them? She went on to say that both identical and fraternal twin sets are studied: Identical twins = monozygotic (MZ) who share 100% of genes, and fraternal twins = dizygotic (DZ) who share on average half of the genes that vary in humans. Both share a prenatal and rearing environment.

She explained that both twins raised together (shared) and twins raised apart (non-shared) are studied.

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*Shared rearing environment makes family members more similar to each other;  
a non-shared environment makes family members less similar to each other.*

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Dr. Finkel further explained that some traits are demonstrated in genetic makeup, whereas others are expressed by environmental influences. For example, intelligence is related to genetics, while lower socioeconomic status is more influenced by environment. In addition, musical ability is more directly correlated to genetics. She also added that other variables, such as age and gender, can affect environmental traits.

The Louisville Twin Study was originally started in 1957. This longitudinal study is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and has studied 1,770 children over the years. The first stage of research focused on the following measures: cognition, temperament, achievement, parenting, and physical health. Some of the research conclusions include the similarity of identical twins in temperament and the increased difference in mental development for fraternal twins over time.

Dr. Finkel joined the midlife stage of the study, which focuses on lifespan cognitive health risks, genetic age, childhood socioeconomic status, educational attainment, self-reported

**TIMELINE**

- 1957: Dr. Frank Faulkner starts project
- 1960: Dr. Steven Vandenburg joins team
- 1967: Dr. Ronald Wilson becomes Director
- 1986: Dr. Adam Matheny becomes Director
- 2000: Dr. Kay Phillips is Acting Director
- LTS loses funding and shuts doors ---
- 2008: Dr. Deborah Winders Davis becomes new Director
- 2014: New funding from National Institutes of Health
- 2019: Full funding of Midlife study Phase I
- LTS reopens and recruits twins now at midlife ---
- 2024: Application for Midlife study Phase II

USCDornsife  
Center for Economic and Social Research  
University of Southern California



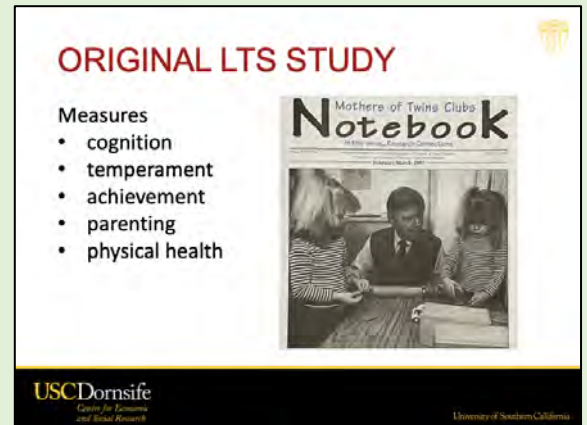
*Dr. Deborah Finkel*

childhood trauma, and mid-life physical and psychological health. The research predicted intellectual functioning at midlife, and change in intellectual functioning from childhood to midlife.

Of interest during this stage of the study is that low birthweight catches up over time, usually by about first grade, and that a shared environment is directly related to this phenomenon. Also, there is a significant genetic finding in regard to a birthweight-to-IQ correlation.

Going forward, this research hopes to focus on the correlation of genes and environment to areas such as hearing loss, high blood pressure, dementia, diabetes and contact sports injuries.

The researchers are currently enrolling past participants in a project they are calling the *Midlife Extension of the Louisville Twin Study*. Dr. Finkel concluded the presentation by encouraging parents of multiples to participate in twin focused research studies due to the wealth of information that can lead to a better understanding of patterns and outcomes in the general population.



## A Legacy of Twin Research

**By Mary Adcock**  
*President*

The Louisville Twin Study is internationally recognized as one of the oldest, largest, and most comprehensive studies of child development related to multiple birth status.

### TIMELINE OF STUDY

**1955** — Study started by British pediatrician Frank Falkner as part of an international growth study

**1958** — Scope of study broadened to include behavior by Dr. Steven Vandenberg

**1964** — First article using findings from the Louisville Twin Study published

**1968** — Dr. Adam Matheny became director of the project, a position he held for nearly 30 years (Dr. Matheny had worked on the Gemini Space Program, John Hopkins, and the National Institutes of Health prior to coming to Louisville in 1959.)

**1976** — Temperament became the chief focus of the study

**2000** — Study closed due to lack of funding

### BY THE NUMBERS

- Involving over 900 sets of twins, 30 sets of triplets, and two sets of quadruplets.
- The families of multiples involved in the study were also studied: Siblings, parents, even grandparents
- Involving over 4,000 children from the Louisville area
- Spanning more than 40 years
- Four books written about the study
- Over 600 scientific articles about the study
- Midlife Extension of study started in 2018
- A few families have four generations involved in the study



## A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

In the original study, multiples were assessed soon after birth in the hospital by someone from the Louisville Twin Study. They especially liked to see the babies before going to the home environment. A pediatrician examined them, specifically noting the babies' temperaments (fussy or easily calmed).

In the first year of life, the multiples were seen every three months. Then, between age one and four, they were seen every six months. After age four, they were seen annually until age 9 or 10, with follow-up assessments conducted at ages 12 and 15.

Written records and videotapes were made of each session.

## SOME EARLY FINDINGS

### *Accidents*

- Research found that boys were three times more likely than girls to have an accident (dog bites, bike or skateboard accidents, bee stings, falls, serious cuts, etc.)

### *Speech Problems*

- There were especially problems pronouncing the letters R and S.
- Boys were more likely to have language difficulties.
- Twins had more speech problems than singletons, but they usually caught up by age 8.

### *Temperament*

- 70% of parents with identical twins can spot differences in temperament.
- By 12 months, definite individual temperament characteristics are seen.

### *Eye Color*

- Children with eyes of lighter color (such as blue) were usually more shy.
- Eye color can change past the age of 6.

### *Growth Hormone*

- Early maturing children, with higher levels of growth hormone, were outgoing, pleasant-natured, and had a slightly higher IQ.
- Boys with lower levels of growth hormone took longer to reach adult stature and were generally more immature, but ultimately better adjusted in adulthood.

## A STUDY REOPENED

**2018** — Midlife extension of the study asks past participants (now between the ages of 40-65) to complete a one-time visit for health surveys, cognitive and physical measurements. This part of the study continues today.

*Some information is from an article written by Dr. Susan Griffith (NOMOTC's Notebook, Feb./March 1977)*





## Workshop: How to Become a Career Competent Parent

By Sara Barr

Media & Publications Vice President

In this workshop, affiliate member Ali Dunn presented *How to Become a Career Competent Parent: Practical Tips to Support Your Child’s Career Development at Every Stage*. She suggests we begin talking about careers with our children at a very young age. (Check out Ali’s book for children under 12 years old called [The Career Explorer](#).)

In the U.S., adults have an average of four different careers throughout their lifetime — not just different jobs — four different careers! Twin studies show that genetics play a role in our career choices and level of job satisfaction.

Ali presented six basic steps to help our children find a satisfying career:

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Building Career Awareness | 4. Exploring Career Options |
| 2. Building Self-Awareness   | 5. Gaining Experience       |
| 3. Career Exploration        | 6. Career Decision          |

Ali reminded the group that each person is on a unique career journey — and the path isn’t linear. We spend most of our time on step number 2: building self-awareness. And there may be times in our lives that we’re well into the sixth step but need to circle back and start again, for example, by improving our self-awareness or exploring new career options.

*Much about the careers we land in is related to our values, interests, personality and skills (VIPS).*



To learn more, visit Ali Dunn’s website at [metwobooks.com](http://metwobooks.com).

Our **values** are often the strongest predictor of job satisfaction. Our **interests** can be the biggest predictor of career engagement. **Personality** determines whether or not a job is a good fit for us. And **skills** are the biggest predictor of job success.

Ali said that it’s important for us to remind our kids that most skills must be learned and can be taught to them. We don’t start a new job already having all the skills required to succeed in that career. Don’t let a lack of skills prevent your child from exploring a particular career.

Ali explained that lots of life experiences tell kids they can’t do something or they aren’t good enough, but a parent’s role is to be supportive. Part of the parent’s role is to:

- Encourage continuous exploration
- Share our own experiences
- Stay positive

A great resource she shared with the group is the U.S. government’s [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#), an online resource to learn more about any career of interest.

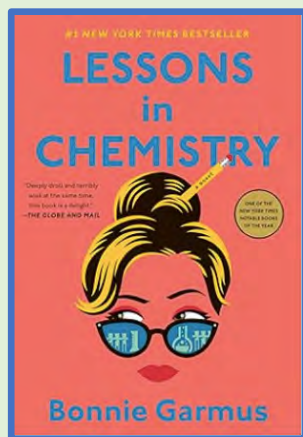
One question to ask our kids as we discuss their career interests: Is *who* you want to be different from *what* you want to be? Ali reminded us that **our work is what we do, not who we are**.



## Workshop: Book Club on *Lessons in Chemistry*

By Sara Barr

Media & Publications Vice President



**Book summary:** In the early 1960s, Chemist Elizabeth Zott joins an all-male team at Hastings Research Institute. There she meets loner Calvin Evans, and the two have (nearly) instant chemistry. Fast forward a few years, and Elizabeth finds herself a single mother and the new star of America’s most beloved cooking show called *Supper at Six*. Elizabeth uses the show to inspire women across the country to stand up for themselves in revolutionary new ways and, as she states in the book, “Use the laws of chemistry and change the status quo.” With a crazy array of supporting characters, Elizabeth faces life’s challenges — and more than one life-altering obstacle — head-on.

During one of the afternoon workshop breakout sessions, Dr. Susan Griffith of **Bluegrass Parents of Twins & Multiples Club (KY)** led a large group of convention attendees in a discussion of the popular fictional book *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.

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*Susan began by asking each of us to remember a time in our past when we faced sexual discrimination and explain to the group, if we wanted to, how we handled the situation.*

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Many personal and interesting encounters were shared among the group.

Susan then led us to recall specific parts of the book, and why we felt they were significant. She challenged us to consider these and other questions: *What can our pets teach us? How do magazines and the media shape our culture? Would Supper at Six be successful in America in the 1950s or 60s? Would it be popular today? Why does Elizabeth always wear a pencil in her hair? How have we each been limited by expectations from society?*

The final questions posed by Susan during this fabulous workshop were these: *How do you define and find family? Can friends provide better friendship and camaraderie than blood relatives?* Using the lifelong friendships made through Multiples of America as the perfect example, our collective answer was a resounding **yes!**



*A large group attended this book club workshop.*



## In Memory Of ...

By Carla Hall

Membership Assistant

*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 passings have come to light, so if you hear of someone who has suffered a loss, please contact us.*

**Joan Babigian**, the 11<sup>th</sup> President of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc./Multiples of America, passed away peacefully, surrounded by her three sons on August 4, 2024, at the age of 87. She had been a recent member of Mountain States Mothers of Adult Multiples (AZ), as well as other clubs in Massachusetts in the past.

In 1957, she met and married Garabed “Gary” Babigian. Her husband passed away in 2016 after 60 years of marriage. Their first child had passed away at five months of age.

She is survived by her three devoted sons: Thomas Babigian and his wife Linda of Westford, Peter Babigian and his wife Gloria of Waltham, and K. Vasken Babigian and his wife Christina of Waltham. She was the loving grandmother of Tiana Sessa and her husband Peter, Cayla Babigian and her fiancé Derek Mantey, Gary, Thomas, Matthew and Nicholas Babigian, Jessica Manoukian and LV Manoukian and his wife, Diane. She was the doting great-grandmother to Blaise and Sienna Sessa, and Sloane and Nazareth Manoukian.



Joan and her husband Gary were devoted members of St. James Armenian Church in Watertown.

She loved to cook, with a particular focus on Armenian food, and she loved Armenian music — especially dancing to Armenian music. And this dancing occurred at various conventions. Her presence demanded respect when she spoke but, when the business concluded, she was just another mother of twins.

She will definitely be missed by all who knew her.

# ***Have your adult multiples become "mixed" together on their credit reports? They need to check!***



*Adult multiples often have "mixed" credit reports. "Multiples mixing" problems occur due to identical dates of birth (DOBs), Social Security numbers with close digits, similar names or the same initials. Equifax, Trans Union and Experian often mix together the financial and personal information of multiples.*

## **Our Services:**

- ◆ Get a free credit report at [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com)
- ◆ If you see signs of "multiples mixing," contact Tod Lewis today
- ◆ Contingent fee agreements. The law makes the bureaus pay.

## **Help When You Need It**

"Attorney Lewis helped expertly manage our 'mixed twin' credit reporting dilemma and litigation (with no out of pocket costs or attorney fees). We highly recommend working with Mr. Lewis as he will help fix your problems and obtain financial compensation for you."

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