

multiple Connections

March 2025



The Brazos Valley Mothers of Twins Club (TX) met at Masfajitas in January to kick off the new year and plan new events, such as a quarterly book club and a Girl Scout Cookie, Wine and Cheese pairing event! Pictured L-R: Dee Montier-Burke, Michelle Perry, Jennifer Nations, President Kelly Heslip, Rachel Hutchinson and Melissa Carter.

COMING UP

March 12

Zoom Connect:
Putting the Fun in Fundraising

March 26

Great Expectations Seminar 3: Toddler Sleep

March 31

Deadline to add-on members to count for
convention credential voting

April 8

Zoom Connect: Boost them Up - Tips for
Growing Multiples' Mental Wellbeing

July 24 - 26

Convention:
Two-Steppin' 2 Tucson

Inside this issue:

- page 2 President's letter: Failure Is a Step Forward
- page 4 The Importance of Inclusion (And How Your Club Can Help)
- page 7 Parents Get Creative with Multiples Sharing a Bedroom
- page 8 A New Podcast: Twin Mom Chronicles
- page 10 Building Our Story: How Local Clubs Are Nailing It
- page 11 Book Reviews: *Twinspiration* and *The Poisonwood Bible*
- page 12 Self-Care Happens from the 'Inside Out'
- page 14 Hosting a Gala: An Interview with Amanda Wilson of Northwest Houston MOMs (TX)
- page 16 Why Multiples Should Play Separately
- page 18 Sponsor ad: Twinsight Therapy, LLC
- page 19 Sponsor ad: AlphaBioLabs

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info@multiplesofamerica.org

www.multiplesofamerica.org

Published by Multiples of America,
a Support Group for Parents
of Twins and Higher Order Multiples

2000 Mallory Lane, Suite 130-600
Franklin, TN 37067-8231

multiples
OF AMERICA

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

support
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Failure Is a Step Forward

By Mary Adcock
President

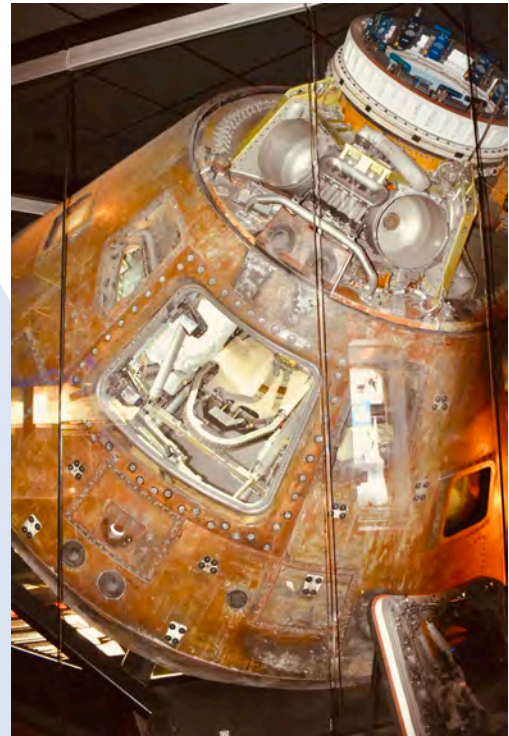
The Odyssey space capsule from Apollo 13 is on display at the Cosmosphere Space Museum just a couple of miles from my home. Every time I see it, I'm reminded of the mantra, "Failure is not an option."

That saying refers to the teamwork, expertise, and innovation needed to safely return the Apollo 13 astronauts to earth following a mid-mission oxygen tank explosion. It's an inspiring moment in history (and also a great movie). But while reciting "failure is not an option" can offer motivation in challenging times, it doesn't always hold true in daily life.

We all experience failure. We backtrack on our goal to lose 10 pounds before swimsuit season. We bungle scoring the winning goal in the soccer game. We miss the assigned deadline for sending in our article for the state organization's newsletter. We find out our plan to increase club membership by holding a carnival for local families with multiples fails to draw a crowd.

Failure doesn't have to be the last word, though. Failure can leave us feeling down; or it can teach us. Failure can seem like a dead-end road; or it can be an opportunity to learn and grow.

So the next time you break your diet by reaching for a bag of potato chips or wipe the tears off your twins' face after they've lost the championship basketball game, try looking at failure as a step forward.



Redefine It

America worked through failure again and again on our way into space and to the moon. You can see the evidence of that all through the Cosmosphere: the Vanguard satellite that never made it farther than four feet off the ground, remnants of an unmanned Mercury space capsule that exploded, the Liberty Bell 7 spacecraft that was lost to the depths of the ocean for 38 years. NASA (The National Aeronautics and Space Administration) looked at these problems as learning opportunities, a natural and necessary step on the way to success. In the process, they redefined failure. They didn't pretend setbacks didn't happen or downplay them, rather they embraced them and analyzed the events as a means to moving onward and upward.

At Multiples of America, we're constantly gauging the impact of our services and benefits by monitoring member engagement with our events, publications, and social media. Sometimes, we fall short of our goals, such as increasing membership or boosting the number of responses to Facebook posts. When that happens, rather than remain in the failure, we try to look at the "why" behind the missed goal. We consider adjustments that could be made to change that trajectory.

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Several local club leaders also shared how they use that same process when they joined in recent discussions about declines in club involvement or volunteerism on our Leadership Sharesop Facebook page. While there is no one answer to those problems, members in the discussion shared perspectives and ideas for forging ahead. If you're a club leader and would like to join in those discussions, sign in to join the page [here](#).

Plan for It

It seems a bit strange to actually plan on failure. Sure we work toward success, but that doesn't mean there won't be a few bumps in the road. Isn't that the reason for keeping a spare tire in a car?

I know I don't plan on getting a flat tire in the midst of running errands around town, but the spare is there just in case I hit a large pothole. And when the time comes to use that tire, I need to have the knowledge of how to retrieve the tire (the tire on our van is hidden below the center of the vehicle), as well as an idea of how to change it (or at least a good mechanic in my phone contact list).

Like the spare tire preparations, it's good to have some "in case of failure" resources and community connections that you or your club can rely on for help when life goes flat.

Multiples of America recognizes this. We provide toolkits, tips sheets and booklets as resources for parents and clubs. We offer individualized counsel to clubs around specific problems through our Parliamentarian and experts on our Board of Directors. Plus, we create partnerships with other non-profits so clubs can readily connect with resources within the community when complications arise, especially during pregnancy and the early years of parenting. Those partnerships were highlighted as part of our December 2024 Zoom Connect. If you weren't able to join us for that Connect, you can listen in on that presentation in our [Zoom Connect Cafe](#).

Face It with a Friend

The best news about failure is that you don't have to face it alone. Friends are essential when plans go awry and the way forward seems impossible. The crew of the Apollo 13 knew that. They didn't try to solve their problem alone. They called down to Mission Control with the famous words, "Houston, we've had a problem here."

It seems to me that "calling in for help" is also the basic premise of connecting with a local club and Multiples of America. Parents face many unique challenges when raising multiples, not just in the early years but through every age and stage. The support of a multiples club filled with others who have "been there, done that" helps in mapping the journey. As one club member shared, "My bags were packed until my husband called the local club for help."

Multiples of America offers a range of both in-person, virtual and email support: Networking at the Annual Convention, Zoom Connects, Great Expectations seminars for expectant and new parents of multiples, and a Multiple Match program to name a few. Local clubs also provide access to tips and information, as well as the offer of a helping hand or listening ear during times of stress or troubles.

Failure Is a Step Forward

So the next time a failure splashes down into your daily life. Step forward. Who knows where you'll land. As Jim Lovell, the commander of Apollo 13 said, "For some time, I thought Apollo 13 was a failure. I was disappointed I didn't get to land on the moon. But actually, it turned out to be the best thing that could have happened."

The Importance of Inclusion (and How Your Club Can Help Other Families)

By Sara Barr

Media & Publications Vice President

If you're looking to be inspired by other moms of multiples, this is the article for you. I had the privilege of interviewing three moms who have children with a range of different needs. These moms' responses are raw, heartfelt and full of great tips for us as fellow humans, as well as fellow club members. Meet these rockstar moms:

- Sarah Breault of **Upstate Parents of Multiples (SC)**, whose 5-year-old son Ryan has autism.
- Alison Leeds of **Polar Bear Mothers of Multiples (NJ)**, whose 14-year-old son Josh was diagnosed with functional abdominal pain syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome-C and pediatric migraines. After multiple severe illnesses, in 2024 he was diagnosed with specific antibody deficiency, a type of primary immunodeficiency. Josh and twin brother Nick had multiple severe food allergies after birth, which Nick outgrew, and Josh's allergies morphed into lactose and fructose malabsorption.
- Melissa (not her real name) wishes to remain anonymous and whose child was diagnosed a few days after birth with a rare genetic syndrome.

SB: What's been the most difficult adjustment since your child was diagnosed?

Sarah: I honestly believe that it's *less* difficult now that we have an official diagnosis. Ryan was diagnosed at age 4. Having definitive "proof" that what we always suspected was indeed happening was reassuring. As he ages, the biggest challenge is to explain to his twin sister, his little brother and to other children that his brain just works differently—he doesn't need to be treated differently, but he might do or say things you don't expect. He might need extra attention sometimes and be very blunt—none of which is bad. He's just unique, like everyone else.

Alison: Having Josh home all the time! He cannot be around people who even have a sniffle because his immune system does not make antibodies to things like the common cold, ear infections, sinus infections, bronchitis, pneumonia and some other scary diseases. His body also cannot break down the polysaccharide coating around bacteria and viruses, so when he gets a cold or anything else it becomes very serious. He missed half of his 8th grade year because he was sick. This year in high school he made it two days, but is currently on homebound tutoring. All the medical appointments, lots of them, home infusions, nurses and everything else that goes along with a child who has a rare disease. I think the worst part for Josh is that he is not in school. He misses his friends, the social interaction and everything that goes along with being in high school. Nick misses his brother and partner in crime. It is hard for Nick because he is "healthy."

Melissa: Adjusting to having a trach (tracheostomy for upper airway insufficiency) has led us to a very different way of life. Early on we were responsible for watching and caring for our baby 24/7—of course—with the addition of oxygen monitoring and suctioning to avoid the airway clogging. The trach limits who can be a caregiver and where we can take our kids. And when the shadow nurse for school isn't available, it's tough keeping one twin home who isn't allowed to go to school without the nurse. It's been hard to make decisions, like sending one kid to school and not the other when services are lacking.

SB: How difficult is the struggle to get the help or accommodations your child needs to succeed?

Sarah: Ryan doesn't need school accommodations, which is a blessing and a curse. It's a blessing in that we know he won't struggle academically. It's also a curse. Because he doesn't need a formal plan, it's been a challenge as he started kindergarten to draw attention to the things he *does* need. His preschool classes were smaller, so chatting with the teacher once was really all I needed to do. Now he's in a class of 27 with two teachers. I have to remind Ryan to advocate for himself and also remind the main teacher that he has some needs (like needing to know in advance of any planned fire or safety drills that will be chaotic or loud, needing to be reminded to use the restroom, needing to be asked to participate in group activities rather than left on his own).

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Alison: Josh has had a 504 plan since 2016 for accommodations within the classroom. Last year, since he missed 97 of the 180 days of school, it was suggested we petition the school district for an IEP. It has truly been a horrible experience for us. I feel like the school district doesn't know how to deal with kids when their diagnosis is not cut and dry like autism or ADHD. We are currently under retainer with a disability lawyer who specializes in kids with rare and chronic diseases.

Melissa: School nursing coverage has been a challenge. There'll be months when it's so consistent we start to take it for granted—and it can be weeks of hoping and calling every day to advocate for a placement.

SB: What support from friends, family or club members has been the most helpful?

Sarah: There are countless members of our club who had experience with BabyNet, with occupational and speech therapy and with autism, so they were very helpful in both pointing me to resources and also just empathizing with me when I needed to vent about the countless hoops of getting a diagnosis, health coverage, etc. Most people were really great about not offering advice unless they had the appropriate knowledge. The members of our club have been great about accommodating Ryan at playdates, where he might not want to actually play with the other kids. They've been great about just meeting him where he is, but not making a big deal about it. He's just another kiddo! We also have several members who work in related fields to the support I needed for Ryan, so they have been excellent at providing guidance.

Alison: We have our village here in our hometown, neighbors, friends and the school are all aware of Josh being sick. He has an awesome friend group that knows about him being sick. They try to plan small visits with him, and his friends isolate for two weeks before seeing him to make sure no one is sick and he is not exposed to germs. My mom friends also help us out in the same way, giving us support through meals, calls and other fun stuff. His twin, Nick, is in the same friend group, and if anyone is sick someone always lets us know and they try to stay away from Nick at school also.

Melissa: Sharing stories (and clothes!) with other twin parents and a support group with other parents of medically complex kiddos has been paramount. There is so much kindness in the world. I still cry when I remember my dad waiting in the checkout to buy preemie diapers during the pandemic and they told him there was a limit to only one package per customer. He implored them, he was the only one to help get them for twins—but no exception was given. The customer behind him in line said "Oh, those are the kind I need too, I'll take one" and she bought it for him and refused to let him reimburse her.

In the middle of chaos of premature childcare and learning to keep our baby with jaw differences breathing and fed, I remembered to contact our first twins club. They sent us a care package of preemie clothes and a gift certificate—it was amazing. We returned the clothes plus some, and knew this would help the next family.

SB: What type of inclusion or support do you wish local clubs could provide to help their members?

Sarah: It would be great if clubs had directories of resources, like recommended service providers that go beyond just pediatricians or family practitioners. When parents go through the hoops and come out the other side, while exhausted, they should share what they can with their clubs (when comfortable) so that they can be a resource for others in the future.

Alison: I wish there was more support given to homebound MoMs or parents of multiples where one/both children have complex medical issues. It is hard being home all the time.

Melissa: A preemie care package, and hearing stories from other NICU parents.



Twins Nick (left) and Josh Leeds, age 14

SB: Any advice for other parents who may face similar challenges with their kids?

Sarah: First, what you're feeling in your gut is almost always correct. Second, medication is not necessary for all children, and if your service provider doesn't believe that way, then please look for another opinion. Third, some children are too young to be officially diagnosed, so get a referral to occupational and speech therapy in the interim. If cost is a concern, apply for the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA) program. It's needs-based, not income-based, and it covers what your insurance may not.

Alison: Take it one day at a time, sometimes minutes at a time and always remember to take time for yourself. That was the hardest thing for me to learn, but you will burn out if you don't.

Melissa: Join a virtual support group. [Postpartum International](#) is where we found our online support group. Use all local services like a regional center and in-home support services, and enroll kid(s) in infant/toddler programs within the school system.

SB: What's one thing you wish more people understood about your child or their condition?

Sarah: I really dislike when people say, "Oh, my son is on the spectrum" as though it defines their child. No one needs to give excuses for their children being who they are, so unless it's necessary to share it, I don't. Labels have a way of unintentionally separating kids from their peers, so I try my best to make sure that we don't label him to his face or behind his back. Autism is a spectrum disorder, and it takes many, many different forms. It's not a handicap or a disadvantage, and it's not something to fear.

Alison: Josh is a typical teenager. Just because he has an immune system that does not work correctly doesn't mean that he doesn't have feelings. He craves social interaction, misses his friends and wants to be "normal" like other kids and his brother. Josh is one of the strongest people I know, everything he goes through on a daily basis makes him one of my heroes.

Melissa: Our kiddo has craniofacial differences (and a trach) that are immediately noticeable. Teach children and adults to treat folks who look different the same. Try not to stare. Find out what they are into. Follow their lead about whether or not to talk about their medical device or facial asymmetry. Focus more on what you have in common instead of what makes them different from you.

SB: Anything else you'd like to share?

Sarah: Autism is hereditary. It's not caused by vaccinations, or anything you did during pregnancy. It impacts boys more often than girls, and many adults have autism without having been diagnosed. I can see many of Ryan's traits in my husband. We noticed some of his emotional symptoms/responses by 18 months. People chalked it up to him just being a toddler, but I know it was different, in part because his twin sister didn't do the same things.

One of the biggest clues for us, beyond his emotional outbursts, was that by 18 months Ryan knew his letters, numbers, shapes and colors almost obsessively. He would line up his toys by color, shape and type. He got upset if something was a millimeter out of place, often when we couldn't even tell. He loved routine and could navigate us places better than the GPS. This continued to get more obvious as he aged. While *amazing*, it was also a sign that his brain was different than those of his peers. Thankfully our pediatrician also agreed, and we were able to get him diagnosed at age 4.

Alison: I have been through the different stages of the shock, denial and everything else that goes with a rare diagnosis. It is very different when it is your child. Very different.

Huge thanks to each of these twin moms who are willing to help spread awareness and affect positive changes.



Ryan Breault, age 5

Parents Get Creative With Multiples Sharing a Bedroom

By Julie Hutchins

National Ambassador

One of the biggest practical questions faced by parents expecting multiples is whether or not to have their multiples share a room. This article attempts to tackle this question by providing readers with many thoughts and perspectives from various parents of multiples across the country. This article provides some considerations to take into account when making decisions about room sharing at various stages of childhood, from infancy to adolescence and the early teen years.

For most parents, this decision was largely determined by space availability (or constraints), at least for the early years. Not surprisingly, infancy appears to be the stage during which most room sharing occurs, both for same and opposite gender twins. Parents noted the practical benefits of room sharing at this age — efficiency of feeding and diaper changing and the comfort provided by the togetherness of multiples in one room, both for the infants and the parents. As the infants grew into toddlers, parents often enjoy listening to their multiples “chat” and interact with each other in the same room.

Other parents, due largely to having the available space in their house, choose to put their twins in separate rooms from the start. These parents noted the ability of one multiple to sleep at night while the other multiple was awake or even crying due to illness or some other reason. This, in turn, allows one parent to get some sleep since only one adult was needed to tend to one awake multiple.

Anticipating the need for separation down the road, some parents of different gender multiples choose to separate the multiples from the start to save time and money changing (and possibly redecorating) rooms down the road. This way each child becomes familiar and comfortable in their own room from a very young age. These parents also reported that it was nice for each child to have their own space, which could be used as a place for time outs when needed as they got a little older. Some busy parents of multiples also noted the added benefit of using all available rooms in the home as bedrooms for children — no extra bedroom is available as a guest room to host overnight visitors!

Many parents, especially those with different gender multiples, choose to separate their multiples after the toddler years, space permitting. Their children begin to develop their own interests by this point, particularly with respect to room décor. They are also more mobile at this stage, causing more sleep disruptions for the other multiple also sleeping in the same room. If space allows, parents of same gender multiples often choose to wait until their multiples expressed an interest in separating. Some multiples don't express this desire until adolescence/early teen years.

In the meantime, while their multiples still share a room, some parents get creative and use the extra room as a reading room with a bed, in case it was needed on particularly rough sleeping nights for one multiple.

By the early teen years, most families I interviewed had separate bedrooms for their multiples, even in homes that didn't have additional traditional bedrooms available. Other spaces in the home, such as lofts or basement areas, were converted into bedrooms since by this age, proximity to each other and to parents (for feeding and nighttime wake ups) is no longer needed. Some parents even said that one multiple assisted the other multiple with moving to help speed up the separation process!

In sum, while there were wide-ranging approaches to multiples room sharing, by and large, every parent I interviewed was satisfied with the decision(s) they had made with respect to room sharing of their multiples and did not have any major regrets. Therefore, have confidence in the knowledge of your particular situation, and choose what works best for you, your family and your space constraints.

A New Podcast: Twin Mom Chronicles

By Sara Barr

Media & Publications Vice President

Amber Gordon and Taylor Mora met about three years ago through their local club, **Music City Multiples** (TN). As Amber puts it, “Our families have been inseparable ever since.” Taylor serves as Secretary on her club’s board, and Amber serves as Activities Director. The two friends recently launched a podcast called Twin Mom Chronicles.



Amber Gordon (left) and Taylor Mora became fast friends through their local club Music City Multiples (TN).

Taylor is mom to boy/girl twins Magnus and Ava, age 4. Amber has boy/boy twins Aden and Max, also 4 years old. In fact, their twins were born only five weeks apart. They later learned that their babies had actually shared a room in the NICU for a short time.

While the podcast is not affiliated with Music City Multiples or Multiples of America, you may find Twin Mom Chronicles is a great resource for you on your journey as a parent of multiples. Amber and Taylor teamed up to answer my questions below.

SB: Why did you decide to start the podcast?

We started talking with a group of friends about our experiences and realized that there was a lot of information that we did not know throughout our journey, including our NICU experience. We started talking about needing a platform or a community for others who went through it or are currently going through it. We then connected with others who were going through similar experiences that we went through and were able to help these women by either easing their mind or just being real about what it was like for us.

This confirmed for us that we should try to share our stories with others to try to give them information that we lacked during that time. We know that every pregnancy, birth, and experience is different, but if we could help just one person that would be worth it for them, just knowing they are not alone.

SB: What are your goals and who is the primary audience for the podcast?

Our primary audience is moms, specifically twin moms since that is our experience and what we know. However, through our recording process we have realized that we can relate to any mom on certain levels. We hope to offer insight, community, advice and support all while being open and vulnerable. Our goal is to help other moms going through life experiences similar to ours to realize that they are not alone.

We want to grow this podcast into a safe place for moms to connect with us and with each other in their own communities so they can hopefully build a bigger village of support – because motherhood can be hard. We want to share some of the things we wish we would’ve known while going through these journeys from finding out we were pregnant, our pregnancy journeys, birth stories, NICU journeys, to our present-day experiences.

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SB: What have you learned in the process of starting this podcast?

We started realizing that there was a lack of shared information about certain things pertaining to birth experiences, especially with multiples. We've also learned that it is important for us to open up and be vulnerable during the podcast, even if it is uncomfortable at first because we want others to know that they are not alone with whatever they're feeling. We have also learned it is not easy putting together a podcast or releasing it because of fear of judgement from our vulnerabilities. We are sharing thoughts, emotions, fears, etc., that we have not even shared with some of our closest relatives.

We hope to gain more confidence in ourselves as well by sharing our stories and "secrets" with others. Our friendship has grown even stronger through this process and will continue to grow as we are learning even more about each other and our experiences. We realize that we still do not know each other's full stories yet, and it feels so good to have judgement-free support from each other.

SB: What else would you like readers to know?

We have an amazing group of five families of twins – all with completely different stories and backgrounds. All of our children were born at different gestations with different hospital experiences and birth experiences. When we get together, we have a group of 10 kids (seven boys and three girls) ranging from almost 4 to almost 5 years old. It is complete and utter chaos, but we would not want it any other way. Our group text name is actually the "Chaos Support Group" because that is what it feels like on some days.

The kids all get along so well, and we are all able to be there for each other in whatever ways we can! We watch each other's kids, have play dates and get moms' days out together. We are so lucky to have found our tribe of people, and we want to help others find theirs in one way or another as well. We are so excited to watch our kids grow up together.



You can find Twin Mom Chronicles on Apple Podcast, Pandora, Spotify, Amazon Music, iHeartRadio and GoodPods. [LinkTree](#) has the socials and podcast platforms all in one place.

Amber's advice for others: "As hard as it may be, get out there and find your village. I promise there is someone out there who needs your support just as much as you need theirs."

Taylor agrees the support from a local club is vital. "I don't know where I would be if I did not find my village of twin mom friends – especially Amber – because we all can vent to each other or be care- and judgement-free for a while. We can get together and let the kids

run wild, or we can get together just as moms and brag or complain about motherhood in a completely safe environment."

Building Our Story: Clubs That Are Nailing It

Compiled by DeAnndra Glenn
Media & Publications Department

“My club nailed it by... working together to make care packages for all parents with babies in the neonatal intensive care unit at our local hospital. We wanted the parents to know they weren’t alone in their journey.”

– Kathryn Behling, President
Lowcountry Parents of Multiples (SC)

“My club nailed it by... always being there for each other. Through thick and thin, births and deaths, divorces, or when just down on your luck, we supported each other. We did this financially, with groceries, by babysitting, or by just providing a shoulder to cry on — no matter the time of day or night. These lifesaving assists made us family, which we still are to this day. That is a gift that is, and forever will be, priceless.”

– Carla Hall, State and National Representative
Act Two MOMS (CA)

“My club nailed it by... supporting many needy families and women’s shelters during the holidays over the years. We also shine as a small club that has hosted many state conventions, staying as an in-person club since 1969.”

– Anne Clements, National Representative
Westside Suburban Mothers of Twins (NY)

“My club nailed it by... planning and hosting an engaging state convention in the fall that was both welcoming to first-time attendees and offered informative takeaways for repeat attendees.”

– Julie Hutchins, National Ambassador
Lake County Parents of Multiples Club (IL)

“My club nailed it by... hosting two consignment sales each year that bring us all together! It is a blast and truly amazing how we completely fill a church’s multipurpose building with our stuff and break it all down in just a few days. We sell all our kids’ outgrown items at very affordable prices to other moms in the local community. This event brings in hundreds of shoppers and is our club’s biggest fundraiser and recruiting event!”

– Karen Scurry, Communications Chair
Multiples of the Midlands (SC)

Book Reviews

By Sara Barr

Media & Publications Vice President

Twinchanted Tales by Kerri Otto

Twinchanted Tales: The Power of a Pair is a beautiful picture book targeted to twins. It's the story of a twin pair of girls who are exploring how it feels to be part of a multiple set. It discusses emotions and helps twins understand what it really means to be a twin. The story encourages the girls to be confident and celebrate who they are as individuals. The book is filled with great illustrations. I recommend this book to anyone with young twins, perhaps ages 3-7 years old. Your kids are sure to love the surprise on the inside back cover!

The author, Kerri Otto, is a twin mom and affiliate member of Multiples of America. Visit her website at www.TwinchantedTales.com and find her on Instagram at @twinchanted. And you heard it here first: Kerri is already working on her next book, which will be about identical boys!



The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

The Poisonwood Bible tells the story of a fictional family of six — including twins, Leah and Adah — on a Christian mission during the very real civil war in the Congo in the 1960s. The family spent 17 months living an extremely difficult life in a mud shack in Kilanga in Central Africa. The father is a crazy evangelist and often abusive. Each chapter is written from either the mother or one of the four daughters' perspectives as they battle against malnourishment, malaria, deadly snake bites and much, much more. The author writes in an extremely unique and convincing manner for each character. The writing in this novel is nothing short of pure brilliance!

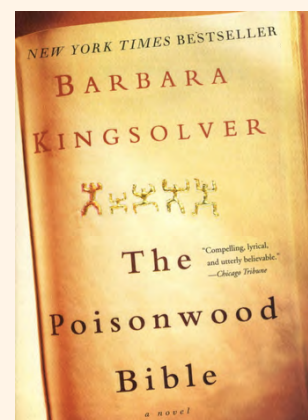
The story explores Christianity as well as democracy. The Congolese people question democracy because it ensures some people won't be happy after any vote is taken — a very interesting perspective. Their preferred approach is to continue discussing a topic until everyone agrees.

So much in this book is worthy of discussion, including the fabulous writing by one of my favorite authors. My only criticism is that I struggled to enjoy the first 150 pages of the 500+ page book. It takes work to read this book. It's long and dense and confusing and sad and surprising and beautiful, and well worth it in the end.

Another interesting aspect of the book is about the frivolousness and waste in America. The book asks these questions: *How can there be so many kinds of things a person doesn't really need? Why must some of us deliberate between brands of toothpaste, while others deliberate between [eating] damp dirt and bone dust to quiet the fire of an empty stomach lining?*

The twin relationship is fascinating as well, and Adah is now one of my all-time favorite fictional characters. She is mute and has hemiplegia, a condition of brain damage that occurs during early development and leaves one side of the body weak or paralyzed. The healthier twin, Leah, doesn't have the condition. Adah is extremely smart and is obsessed with balance, often intentionally reading and writing words and sentences backwards.

In an early chapter, Adah writes, *"Through Adah's eyes, oh the world is a-boggle with colors and shapes competing for a half-brain's attention.... I was born with half my brain dried up like a prune, deprived of blood by an unfortunate fetal mishap. My twin sister, Leah, and I are identical in theory. Leah and Adah began our life as images mirror perfect. We have the same eyes dark and chestnut hair. But I am a lame gallimaufry and she remains perfect."* Heartbreaking, yes, but Adah is strong and in time figures out for herself how to take control of her life.



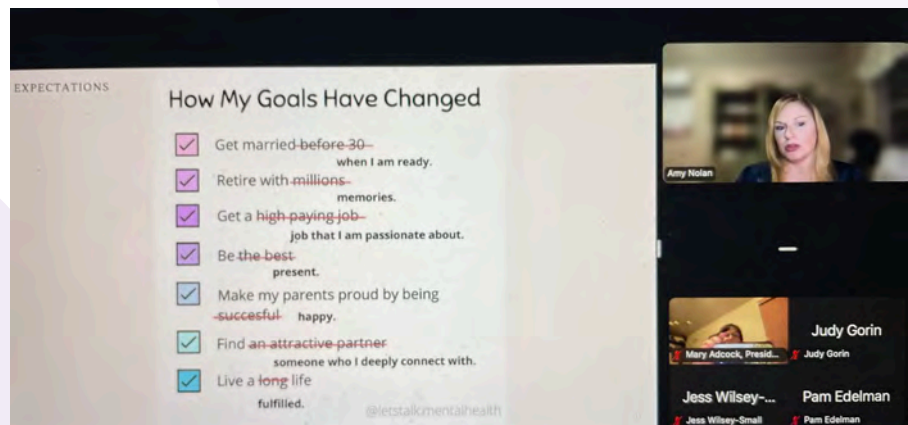
Self-Care Happens from the ‘Inside Out’

By Mary Adcock
President

How would you answer the question, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” Most would cite something to do with a profession: caring nurse, published novelist, successful manager. Amy Nolan’s answer is one word: **happy**.

Amy is a life coach, therapist, entrepreneur, and creative soul. She shared how joy matters and self-care happens “from the inside out, not outside in” during the January 2025 Zoom Connect on “Self-Care for Busy Parents.”

“The main thing I hear from people is that they’re overwhelmed,” Amy started. Why? According to Amy, people offer a number of reasons from “I don’t have the time” to “my bucket is empty.”



Often, an initial response is to reach for temporary gratification. That’s what Amy said she did several years ago when she found herself burning out from the challenges of running a business. Friends suggested all she needed was a night to herself, a bath and a glass of wine. Others might turn to shopping, comfort food, or a massage.

Guess what? “It didn’t change my life,” Amy shared. So Amy’s next step was to turn to research. She interviewed 7,000 people about self-care. The results helped her learn how to take care of her mind, body, and spirit from the “inside out.”

Amy shared three avenues she found to “real self-care.”

- Knowing
- Being
- Doing

Knowing

Research says 74% of American parents say they are burnt out, according to Amy. Knowing is an awareness of those pressures in life, and a recognition of signs of burn out, when they occur. Signs might include irritability, trouble sleeping, restlessness, or poor concentration.

It’s good to have an awareness of “mind and body burnout,” said Amy. “Being stressed is no joke...No amount of money can get your time and health back.”

Part of knowing is also being able to “fight for yourself and advocate for yourself,” added Amy. Research shows parents tend to focus first on their children, pets, elder relatives, and a spouse or significant other.

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Where do parents put themselves? According to the research Amy shared, parents place themselves last. How do parents move into first or second? There's no judgment in saying "no," according to Amy. "...Show up for yourself."

"It takes a lot of work to say 'no,' to have boundaries," said Amy. And, she added, there shouldn't be any personal negative self-talk concerning that response. In fact, Amy explained, sometimes the "no" can lead to others taking on more personal responsibility.

Being

Being is what we know about ourselves and how we find ways to reflect about our lives. But, being is hard work, according to Amy. For one, amid our busy lives, people rarely find a quiet time and a space for reflection. Second, once they get that time, many are quick to distract themselves from the work of looking within.

Consider, for example, the waiting room of a doctor's office, said Amy. There's usually a few minutes of quiet and space there. "I've found it's a place to sit down, take a deep breath, and sit with my thoughts," Amy noted. However, Amy shares many others don't take that same opportunity for a moment of reflection. What are they doing? "They take out their phones," Amy said. The phone can be a way of distracting yourself from doing the work of being, Amy noted. Excuses are another. "Be mindful of your thoughts and the excuses you make for yourself," said Amy. Those excuses might be self-talk lines like, "I'll take care of myself when..." or "I'll be happier when..."

"Approach yourself with compassion," Amy added. "...Give yourself permission to do those things now."

Doing

Doing is the living, the actions of each day. Doing is about making a conscious choice toward self-care. Results of a 2023 survey Amy shared found that about 26% of people noted their daily "to do" list as the main factor getting in the way of their own self-care. About 26% of people cited work as the primary obstacle, with 16% choosing parenting.

Whatever the obstacles, self-care is a personal choice to "show up in the now for yourself," according to Amy. Amy suggested parents could complete a Wheel of Balance for help in evaluating where they are placing the priorities of their daily lives. "Ultimately, you are responsible for your own happiness," she said. But do remember, "you aren't meant to be happy all the time."

Bio

Amy has a master's degree with distinction in Psychological Counseling, an Education Specialist degree with distinction in Organizational Management, and an Executive Coaching Endorsement. Above all, she is the mom of a daughter and twin sons and a member of **Jersey Shore Mothers of Multiples** (NJ).

Her website, <https://lifedesignbyamy.com/>, includes blogs on Finding Hope in Dark Times, Planning a Sane Family Vacation, Aging Wisdom with Time, the Positives of Procrastinating, and more. The Wheel of Balance worksheet that Amy referenced in the presentation can be found on her website at:

<https://lifedesignbyamy.com/balance/>.



Zoom Connect Cafe

Amy's entire Zoom presentation is available for viewing 24/7 in the **Zoom Connect Cafe** on our website.

Hosting a Gala: An interview with Amanda Wilson of Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples (TX)

By Denise Lewis

Media & Publications Department

DL: How much time was allowed to plan and execute once your club made the decision to host the event?

Amanda: I started the process about one year out. I presented my idea to the executive board in October 2022, we all agreed hosting a Gala was a good idea, so I began looking for a venue. From mid-October through mid-December, I researched and met with several local venues, as well as created all necessary documentation for the event. My goal was to keep Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples' cost as low as possible, while providing an outstanding Gala. In January 2023, I presented my findings to the executive board, we voted, the venue was approved, and we signed a contract that month. In January, we also booked iHostPoker and a DJ for the event. After that, Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples Gala volunteers began reaching out to potential donors, etc. We hosted several Zoom meetings between January and September to check in with our volunteers and to keep the momentum going.

DL: Were there other events that had any impact on choosing a date?

Amanda: Of course, I was certainly looking for an event date that wouldn't overlap with large holidays, or highly traveled times of the year. I spoke with my co-chair Alyson about it, and we came up with September, which was after the back-to-school rush and before the major holidays. It also provided enough time to seek out donations and sponsors.

DL: How did you decide on a theme?

Amanda: My amazing, and immensely supportive co-chair, Alyson, and I spit balled several different themes and Gala names before landing on the perfect one to present to the club. She is actually the one who came up with the name Boots & Bling. It complimented the name of the previous Gala Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples had several years prior called Diamonds & Denim.

DL: What were the main requirements of the venue (positives and negatives)?

Amanda: The venue needed to fit the theme Boots & Bling. I wanted to have an affordable, classy environment, that was inviting, possessed some moody lighting, good food, nice bar area, pleasant staff and wood elements. It was a tall order, but The Hearthstone Country Club fit the bill perfectly. We have a current club member who is a member of Hearthstone, and we were able to get the room rental fees waived, which save us hundreds of dollars.

DL: How were the sponsor tiers chosen and priced? Would you mind sharing the different levels?

Amanda: I had limited documentation and notes from the previous Gala to work with, but thankful there were some that I used as a starting point to create new paperwork for the Boots & Bling Gala. There were four different levels of sponsorships offered, each providing different benefits ranging from a fully reserved table for 10 the night of the event at \$1200 down to company recognition on our website, and social media platforms at \$250.



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DL: How many club members participated in the planning and donation gathering versus how many members are in your local club?

Amanda: That's a good question. Securing volunteers is always a challenge, and this event was no different. Thankfully we had, and still have, a core group of women who are committed to the betterment of Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples. These women sacrificially gave of their time to help make the Boots & Bling Gala what it was. I created a Facebook Group Chat, where I fondly referred to the volunteers as my Gala Gals. There were a total of 11 of us in the chat. Prior to the event I recruited some older teens who needed volunteer hours, they monitored the silent auction and raffle basket area the night of the event. In 2022-23, we had approximately 110 members.

DL: How were you able to track donations and ensure that receipts were issued, and sponsors were acknowledged accordingly?

Amanda: A good tracking system is invaluable. We utilized Google Sheets and had several different tabs, such as Baskets, Corporate sponsor request, Donation request, and Etsy request. The 11 of us who were seeking sponsorships had access to the Google Sheet to make updates; this allowed us all to see who was working on what, and to keep track of raffle basket items. My co-chair and I reviewed, reviewed, reviewed, everything that was going on with the Google Sheet to ensure nothing was missed.

DL: What were the main issues that you encountered?

Amanda: The main issue I encountered was extending grace to myself. As the chair, there is an immense amount of pressure to produce results. I wanted to not only meet but exceed everyone's expectations, and even up to just a few months before the event there were a few gals on my team who doubted the success of the event. My main drive was I knew I had created a solid foundation to work with; I knew we had dedicated volunteers and a meticulously reviewed game plan. My co-chair and I kept up the positive energy and encouragement as we worked those last few months on preparations for the Gala.

Another issue we experienced was despite requesting sponsors and donations as far out as nine months before the event, many items were slow to roll in. Both Alyson and I had to project confidence and patience to our Gala Gals as we waited for the last details to come together.

DL: Did you find that the event was successful / worth the time and effort?

Amanda: To date, the Boots & Bling Gala is the most successful fundraising event we've ever had. It was very much worth the time and effort. Knowing that I was a part of an event that significantly increased our club's sustainability means the world to me.

DL: How much net profit did your club make on this event, and did the club need funds available in advance?

Amanda: The Boots & Bling Gala net profited just under \$17,000 for Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples. It cost about ten grand to put on the Boots & Bling Gala. We have a budget line for Gala expenditures and income.

DL: What did you feel you could have done better, and what could you have done without?

Amanda: The Boots & Bling Gala was truly a learning experience. I wanted to be sure and document everything, so those after us would have solid blueprints to work with when planning future events. There is definitely some tweaking that can be done going forward, on things such as night of event transitions between activities. Overall, I am so grateful for the experience and look forward to seeing how others improve upon it.

DL: Would you do it again?

Amanda: Absolutely, in fact I am pleased to announce that Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples will host the Ruby Red Rodeo Gala in the fall of this year. Chair Lindsey C. and co-chair Bernadette P. have already been working tirelessly to make this event great, and I can't wait to enjoy another memorable evening with Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples.



These photos from the 2024 Boots & Bling Gala show smiles all around. Everyone who attended enjoyed a fabulous evening, and Northwest Houston Mothers of Multiples (TX) is proud to have hosted their most successful fundraiser to date.

Why Multiples Should Play Separately

By Smadar Zmirin

Affiliate Member and owner of Twinful Life

Twins and triplets are often seen as built-in playmates, always having someone to share their time and experiences with. It may seem like an ideal scenario—constant companionship, shared interests, and built-in entertainment. However, while this close bond is valuable, it is equally important to recognize the need for individual space and independence.

The Importance of Personal Space for Multiples

Every person, regardless of age or relationship, needs personal space. This applies to multiples as well. Although they have never known life without each other, that doesn't mean they must always enjoy or accept sharing every moment.

Constantly having someone in their space — without the ability to choose when and how they interact — can be overwhelming.

When twins feel obligated to always include their same-age sibling in play, they may struggle to recognize and express their own feelings. They might suppress frustrations, assume they must always be accommodating, or even feel guilty for wanting alone time. This can interfere with their ability to develop healthy emotional boundaries and self-awareness.

The Benefits of Separate Play for Each Twin

Providing multiples with opportunities for independent play offers numerous benefits, individually and for their relationship:

1. **Fosters Individuality** – Each is a unique person with their own thoughts, interests, and preferences. Separate play allows them to explore their own likes and dislikes without the influence of their twin, helping them build a strong sense of self.
2. **Encourages Social Development** – Interacting with other children independently teaches multiples valuable social skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, and cooperation. They learn to navigate friendships without relying on their twin as a social buffer.
3. **Promotes Emotional Independence** – When multiples always play together, they may become overly dependent on each other for comfort and entertainment. Playing separately helps them develop confidence in being alone and making independent choices.
4. **Strengthens Their Bond** – Allowing multiples to have separate experiences makes their shared moments more meaningful. When they come back together, they have new stories to share, different perspectives to bring, and a healthier appreciation for each other's presence.



Visit twinfullife.com or email Smadar Zmirin at smadar@twinfullife.com, who is based out of New Zealand, to learn more.

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Practical Ways to Encourage Separate Play

If multiples are used to always being together, encouraging independent play may require a gradual approach. Here are some ways parents and caregivers can support this:

- **Provide Individual Play Spaces** – Set up separate play areas where each twin can have their own toys, books, or art supplies. This allows them to engage in activities independently without feeling pressured to share everything. When they are very small, even spacing them on the play mat, or placing them on different mats slightly away from each other, will provide a sense of separation for both babies and parents, and allow the parent (or caregiver) to engage with them on a more personal level.
- **Encourage Different Interests** – Support each in exploring their own hobbies. If one enjoys painting and the other prefers building blocks, allow them to pursue their interests separately.
- **Schedule One-on-One Time** – Spend quality time with each individually, whether it's reading a book, going for a walk, or playing a game. This helps them feel valued as individuals. For very small babies or solo caregiver/parents, even spending time with one while the other is engaged in play on their own can set the scene for invaluable one-on-one time. This will help build the expectation that each child will have their caregiver's full attention at some point, and will enjoy a precious moment all for themselves.
- **Organize Playdates with Other Children or Family Members** – Encourage each to spend time with different friends. This helps them build relationships outside of their twin dynamic and develop social confidence. For multiples with other siblings, encourage the children to spend time with each on their own, so the children don't feel obligated to always interact with the twins or triplets as a set. This will help strengthen the other sibling bonds in the family.
- **Normalize and Validate Alone Time** – Reinforce the idea that wanting personal space is natural and healthy. Let them know it's okay to take breaks from each other and that doing so doesn't mean they love their sibling any less.

Encouraging multiples to play separately isn't about creating distance or weakening their bond — it's about fostering their individuality and emotional well-being. By giving them the freedom to explore their own interests, develop independent social skills, and set personal boundaries, they gain the confidence to navigate the world on their own terms. And when they do come together, their connection becomes even stronger — built on choice rather than obligation.

*Want more tips and insights from Smadar?
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