

*National*

*Organization of*

*Mothers*

*Of*

*Twins*

*Clubs, Inc.*

**SUBJECT:** Involving and Retaining Mothers of Older Multiples

**RESEARCHER:** National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

**DATE:** June 2005 – December 2005

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to explore the best ideas for retaining and involving mothers of older multiples in local, state, and national levels of NOMOTC.

**METHOD:** A questionnaire was printed in the NOMOTC's Notebook that was mailed in and available to be filled out online on Survey Monkey and NOMOTC's Website and submitted electronically. The target population included mothers with multiples age five and older.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A total of 310 surveys were received and broken down as follows:

Age of mother of multiples (MOM) ranged from 25 yr to 55 yr with the following breakdown of ages:

25-30 yr olds - 1%    31-35 yr olds - 10%    36-40 yr olds - 26%    41-45 yr - 26%  
 46-50 yr olds - 15%    51-55 yr olds - 7%    56+ yr olds 16%

Ages of the multiples ranged from 2 yr to 55 yr. with the following breakdown of ages:

2 - 4 yr olds - 2%    5 to 8 yr olds - 48%    13-19 yr olds - 16%    9-12 yr olds - 15%    20-29 yr olds - 6%  
 40-49 yr olds - 2%    50-55 yr olds - 2%

Type of Multiples: frat twins – 56%    identical twins – 28%    triplets – 4.2%    quads – 1/3%  
 boy multiples - 37%    girl multiples - 32%    mixture boys/girls - 23%

62% had singletons ranging in age from 1 to 58 yrs old and were evenly divided between boys and girls.

The vast majority of mothers joined their local club when their multiples were 0 to 2 yr old (94%). Followed by those that joined when their multiples were 3 to 5 yr old (4%) and 6 to 10 yr old (1%). Two respondents joined when their multiples were 10 yr old and one joined when their multiples were 21 yr old.

The longest length of membership in a local club was 50+ years. The majority length was 6-10 yrs (38%). Followed by 0-5 yrs (20%), 20 + yrs (18%), 11-15 yrs (15%), and 16–20 yrs (9%).

An overwhelming number of respondents have held an office or chairmanship in their local clubs (87%). And 53% are currently serving in an office.

A small percentage of respondents belong to more than one club (13%) and one third of them belonging to a club that is strictly for mothers of older multiples (34%). Currently 17% hold an office/chairmanship in both clubs.

Respondents stated that in any year, they attend their local club's monthly meetings: 0-3 times (31%), 4-6 times (14%), 7-10 times (31%), and over 10 times (25%). When asked why some of them attend less than seven meetings in a year the majority stated that their children were older (50%) and that the

programs offered were not of interest to them (39%). Other reasons were feeling uncomfortable (10%), no connection with members (9%), difficulty finding a sitter (7%), and spouse (2%). Also mentioned was wanting to spend time with other children, having to work, too busy, guilt and meetings being too far away.

A large percentage of local clubs offer activities other than monthly meetings (95%) including MOMs night out, adult parties, fundraisers, and 78% of respondents said they participate in these activities. About 87% of clubs offer activities for singletons. When asked if clubs offered "Big Sister/Little Sister" programs about half stated they did (48%). However, only 28% said they were paired with a Big Sister and only 27% were paired with a little sister. Of those that were not paired with a big sister or little sister, 70% said that the program was not available then or not offered to them.

Half of the clubs (50%) offered programs dealing with multiples age 5 & above throughout the year. However, only 15% offer programs dealing with singletons. A large number of clubs offered programs geared to mothers of any age (77%).

77% of respondents said their states have an organization, but 10% were not sure. Of those saying they have a state organization, 53% have attended a meeting; 37% have held an office/chairmanship; and 63% are currently holding an office/chairmanship. Of those that did not attend a state meeting, 32% said it was too difficult to attend (too busy, no time, other obligations), 12% said it was too far away, another 12% said that they were not interested, and 4% said it was too expensive.

Only 26% of state organizations offer other gatherings for local clubs/members besides convention. However, 36% of respondents were not sure if the states had other gatherings. This is a large percentage and states may wish to look into the advertising of their events to its members. Some of the other gatherings listed include: board meetings, picnics, fall/spring meetings, family outings (amusement parks, camping, sporting events, zoo), dinners, area MOM mergers, and workshops.

Only 39% of respondents ever attended a NOMOTC convention. Several reasons were stated including: Too expensive (18%), too far (15%), too busy (12%), work/other commitments/not convenient (7%), no child care (2%).

Only 18% of respondents have been a national worker (NW) with 42% of them currently being a NW. Those that were never a NW, stated that they are too busy/no time/other commitments (24%), had no interest (8%) and already volunteered in local/state/schools (6%). 4% of the respondents did not know what a NW was and 3% said they did not know how to volunteer or were ever approached about it.

## RESULTS

When asked what clubs have done/are doing to retain mothers of older multiples, respondents said:

- Not much/nothing/not enough
- Maintain and develop friendships
- Offer a wide variety of club activities (Tai Chi, cooking programs, movies, book clubs, scrapbooking, woman's health issues)
- MOM's Nite Out
- Topics and outings for any aged children (beach, sports, zoos,)
- Offer discounted memberships for 5+ years as member. Some offer free memberships for 15+ years.
- Offer HS scholarships for multiples
- Stay in contact with long time members. Invite them to meetings, email them reminders of meetings/events, ask their advice, ask for their help on committees, make them feel welcome, and involve them.
- Have a club within the club for mothers with older multiples

- Clothing Sales and fund raisers
- Have “Long Time Member’s” lunch outside of club

The respondents offered a large number of ideas and suggestions for keeping mothers with older multiples. They are listed below:

- Make sure that club focus is on all members and not just on MOMs with small multiples
- Have more meeting topics that are appropriate for all members (generic topics like woman’s health, fitness, CPR, book club, etc.)
- Try to have a yearly meeting like “Homecoming” or “Club Birthday” where members with older multiples come and participate by sharing stories and experiences
- Offer reduced club dues for members 5+ years. For added incentive, offer free memberships for members with 15+ years to entice members to keep their membership
- Acknowledge older members for their contributions (ex. Annual awards night). Not only does this give well deserved kudos to the members but also makes younger members aware of them
- Find out what the moms with older multiples needs are in your club and add these to your clubs calendar
- Have an “experienced” MOM coordinator. When the club meeting topic is geared toward mothers with younger multiples, the older MOM’s can have a break out session in another part of the room or different room that the coordinator sets up and runs
- Try to have less speakers/programs during the meetings and more socializing time
- Have social time at a restaurant after the meetings
- Introduce long time members at meetings and events
- Keep meetings fun and try to have several meetings that allow for a lot of interaction so you can get to know members like Bunco, bingo, scrap booking, etc.
- Try starting an “After 5 yr old” group that can meet when kids are in school. Mothers can have a breakfast or lunch group for support/networking
- Attempt to work around the school calendar as much as possible. Have members submit their calendars if children are in different schools
- Don’t penalize members for not attending meetings/events
- Try having a club with in a club or subgroups (geared to specific age groups i.e. 6-12 yrs, 13-HS and adult multiples) that would meet on the same day or even different day than the meetings. Also offer more social activities for MOMs with school aged and above
- Encourage members with older multiples to attend state and national conventions as a delegate or club member. Assist with registration fees if possible. They may have more time of offer than younger members. Also this will keep them involved at the local level and will allow them to develop friendships in other multiple organizations not just local
- Ask older multiples to help out with younger kid events/parties

- Highlight accomplishments of teen multiples i.e. graduation from HS, getting drivers license, etc.
- Offer education scholarships for multiples graduating from HS. Members who would have normally dropped their membership may stick around for the possibility of a scholarship award
- Have more activities for school aged children and teens
- Have meeting topics about school age multiples (school issues, peer pressure, bullying, drug awareness dating, competition, college, etc.). Offer these members something they cannot get elsewhere so that they will make time in their schedules to attend
- Have swap nights that allow members to sell or swap sports and dance equipment (shin guards, helmets, pads, ballet/tap shoes, dance wear)
- Offer more programs for working MOMs and single parent MOMs. This area is underserved in the community and in local clubs. Gives them something they cannot find elsewhere
- Avoid cliques at all costs
- Allow and invite grandchildren to participate in club kid parties
- Offer a column in your newsletter or in Notebook from older MOM's perspective. For example – advice from school aged MOMs or advice from MOMs of adult multiples. It is good information for all aged MOMs
- Encourage members with older multiples to stay in the club. Treat them with respect in terms of welcoming them, keep them active and involved, and never make them feel left out. Ask their advice but also ask them for ideas and information. Give them reasons to participate – MOM panels, sharing experiences, chairmanships, etc. Make them feel their contributions and talents are wanted and valued

## CONCLUSION

Respondents had many wonderful ideas that members clubs can utilize in their local clubs to retain members who are mothers of older multiples.

It was wonderful to have so many respondents in the 20+ years category for length of membership fill out this survey. It gives credence to the information that was gathered. And it does prove that local clubs can retain members with substantial longevity.

Those that have not attended state gatherings other than convention a large number (36%) did not know if the states had other gatherings. States may wish to look into the advertising of their events to its members so to decrease this number and have more attendance at events/gatherings. Also 10% of respondents did not know if they have state organization.

The slightly disturbing statistics of 4% of the respondents stating they did not know what a NW was and 3% said they did not know how to volunteer or were never approached about it. This may require better advertising including word of mouth and it may be beneficial to have more one to one conversations with members

The main reasons older MOMs stay members in local clubs is because of the friendships they have developed over the years; for the information and support they cannot find in other places including topics, speakers, events, etc.; for "Me Time" away from the family; and the desire to help and assist newer members because they are grateful for the assistance they received when they first joined.

"It is important to have members get involved in their club early on so that they will stay a member as children age", one respondent said. "We are more than just MOMs, we are groups of friends. The older members pass this legacy down to newer members. We need to continue to do so." Another stated, "I think that staying a member is basically

due to the member's loyalty to their club and her continued pride in being a member of such an exclusive group of women.”

For the 310 respondents that filled out the survey, they feel passionate about being a member of a MOM club. They have found friendships and support and camaraderie that they cannot find any place else. It is important that local clubs try to retain their older members as this is their legacy and ultimately their future.