

Connecting MBC, Chapters, Volunteers and Members...

Report from National...

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At the end of April, I was in Huntsville, Ontario at the Spring Interim Board Meeting, surrounded by four hardworking and dedicated MBC volunteers (the Board and the Office Manager) who came together for three very full days to discuss, plan and prepare items of importance to MBC and its membership. Picture this: five women, five laptops, a lot of paper, and emails flying from laptop to laptop with a flurry of editing all due to a wireless setup. At the same time, these women were sending emails to other volunteers who, from their homes across the country, responded with information, provided updates and shared in the work that is needed to run a national organization in a country the size of Canada. What an amazing team!

The agenda for the Spring Interim Board Meeting was designed to allow time for the team to work together on areas such as finances, AGM planning, Conference workshop preparation and Annual Report writing, as well as to provide updates from Board Members, discuss MBC's contributions to COMBO and ISTS, and hold the most anticipated discussion and resolution of all—that of a new membership fee structure for chapter affiliate members. A follow-up report will summarize the outcomes of the overall meeting; more detail on the membership structure was shared during the AGM at MBC's 2007 Conference held May 31st to June 3rd in Kitchener, Ontario.

Over the month of April, much of my time was spent preparing for the International Congress of Twin Studies held in Ghent, Belgium from the 7th to the 10th of June. In regular correspondence with the Board Chair for COMBO, I have learned more about the roles of ISTS and COMBO, and the importance of staying connected with these very important international organizations. As of press time for this issue of Multiple Moments, both Gail Moore (Vice-Chair) and I plan to attend on behalf of MBC. Along with the presentation Gail will deliver regarding our National Multiple Births Awareness Day, we will also share our best practices and learning with representatives from other peer national organizations (similar to MBC) from countries all over the world. In addition, we will attend many workshops given by leading medical professionals and researchers in the area of multiple births, covering topics such as: Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome; monochorionic twin pregnancies—complications and management options; genetics of normal and abnormal behavior in childhood and adolescence; risks of ART; twins' relationships; and many more. For information about the ICTS schedule visit <http://www.twins2007.be/Schedule.html>.

Over the month of May, the Board and other national volunteers prepared for the AGM and Conference in Kitchener May 31-June 3rd. We were busy working with Vicki (Office Manager) to prepare the required documents and to plan for the workshops we led on the Saturday afternoon. One of the most interesting and exciting workshops for me (and I am sure for others)

was the opportunity to listen to various chapters share their experiences and knowledge during the Chapter Exchange. We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to see many of you there and to spend time with friends—old and new. If you weren't able to make it this year, try and make it a goal to be with us next year. You will be glad that you did!

Wishing you a fun and sun-filled summer!



MBC Board Members at the Spring Interim Board Meeting. Left to right (back) are Nicole Fisher, Vicki Riley and Kim Weatherall, and sitting in front is Gail Moore. Absent from the photo are Jennifer Dawson (taking the picture) and Cheryl Wadasinghe (who was unable to attend).

**Kim Weatherall, MBC CHAIR/
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Have you ever promised someone that you would do something, but for whatever reason you simply cannot fulfill that promise? Are there days when you start out saying, "Today I am going to finish...." or "Today I am going to meet that deadline", or simply "Today I am going to stroke every last item off that list"? And yes, there are those days where you simply want to cross off just one item!

For many parents of multiple-birth children, this struggle is a daily reality as they juggle the new priorities that have taken over their lives with the birth of their children. As these parents soon learn, their lives are temporarily not their own—well, maybe a little longer than temporarily! As new parents of two, three or more, we learn that our days have been decided for us, that on occasion the opportunity to have a shower in those early weeks is a bonus, and that if we can actually get everyone dressed and out the door in less than an hour, we are doing great.

The internal tension you experience as priorities battle for what was once your own time is unbelievable, the guilt when you miss yet another deadline is tremendous, the disappointment in yourself and the question of what it must look like to the person waiting for you to keep up your end of the deal can all be just too much to handle. And have you ever noticed that because it is all so overwhelming, you actually feel like you are going in reverse and accomplishing nothing at all?

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Before I was a mother of now almost-20-year-old daughters, I was pretty unorganized, I would say fairly lazy and not so great at prioritizing what should be done in a day. However, I truly believe their birth was what has inspired my multi-tasking capabilities and my need to organize. With help from other multiple-birth parents from my MBC chapter when I was a new parent, I soon learned that I was not alone in my feelings of disorganization, broken promises and my messy house!

One of the biggest challenges for new parents of multiples is to learn to accept that for a time, life won't be perfect, that on occasion you won't make that meeting you said you would, that you may live out of the laundry basket and not the dresser, and that nothing on your to-do list will get done that day—or even that week. It is when parents realize that the real priorities in their lives are to meet the immediate needs of their family (food, shelter and love) and to keep themselves healthy that they will have the greatest sense of completeness—not when that last item is stroked off the never-ending to-do list.

You might be asking what sparked this topic for this column. The answer is simple. My workload has been insane, the demands on my time to prepare for the MBC AGM/Conference and for the Congress in Belgium have been overwhelming, getting all four of our income taxes completed by the deadline impossible, and house-cleaning, well, that is a foreign word in my vocabulary these days! But what has been hanging over my head most is the fact that for the last couple of weeks I have been promising and re-promising completion of this article for MM. I have even resorted to promising numerous bags (potentially now an entire case) of Tandoori Doritos to Meredith to buy me more time.

So what's my point? Simply to share with you that as parents of multiples, we will all make it through what we have to in the end, that these struggles will make us stronger, that what needs to be done will get done, and that at the end of the day what is most important is that we remain healthy, that our children are safe and that we know how to:

1. Hit the snooze button on the electronic task lists.
2. Change the date at the top of the written to-do list.
3. Always know how and what to use to bribe for additional time! Oops—that should read make friends with other parents of multiples in your area so that you can share with one another what is not getting done on your task lists today!

Wishing you the very best of summers!

MBC Website Links!!

Over 200 links to multiple-birth shopping and parenting resources/website links

Lori MacEwen,

MBC VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

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As we celebrate Tyler and Brayden's seventh birthday, I am once again reminded of how fast time really does go by. In some ways it seems like it was only yesterday when we were looking at double strollers and trying to decide between Huggies or Pampers. Yet now our decisions are much more complex: should we keep them in the same class, should we try them on different soccer teams, will they always be happy sharing their bedroom? Time does seem to fly by each year even faster than the last, and with that are the memories from the year before.

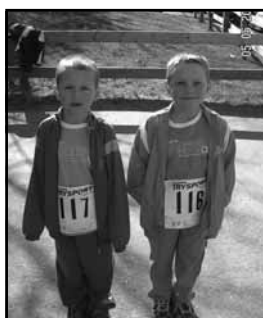
As we celebrate another Multiple Births Canada National Conference and AGM, it allows us to reflect on the previous year. It encourages us to look back on the accomplishments and successes of the year behind us, and to look forward to new challenges for the year ahead.

This past year has seen some changes with respect to volunteers. We have had some wonderful and dedicated volunteers step down from their positions, and yet at the same time we have been fortunate that some new volunteers have joined the MBC team. Change is sometimes difficult for some, yet our new volunteers have taken on their new roles with enthusiasm and determination, and we are grateful for their contributions. For our volunteers who resigned this past year, we are thankful for your years of hard work and passion; we miss you and wish you continued success both personally and professionally.

Multiple Births Canada has done so much for multiple-birth communities from coast to coast. I am sure that each one of us could tell a story or two about how MBC helped a friend, a neighbour, a family member or perhaps ourselves. As you reflect, keep in mind that behind each story stands a volunteer (or two). It is the volunteers of MBC and their chapters who help to tell these stories, who help to live these stories and who help to continue on with the mission of MBC.

For MBC volunteers, as you look back on this past year, thank yourself and other members for the successes you have accomplished by being part of MBC and for volunteering your time to such a fantastic organization.

As you are aware, every year we join other volunteers across Canada in celebrating National Volunteer Week. Although National Volunteer Week is now over (it was celebrated from April 15th to April 21st), please remember the importance of this year's theme: *volunteers grow communities*.



Tyler and Brayden MacEwen participated in their first 3km road race.

We are always looking for new volunteers to fill various positions within MBC. I am sure that there is a position within MBC that would interest you. Please assist MBC in the continuation of the growth of the multiple-birth community. Volunteers are vital to the success of MBC and its continued growth.

Many thanks for your ongoing contributions to MBC, your chapters and your communities!!!

Lori

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Report from National...

Gail Moore,
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
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Since my last report, most of my MBC efforts have been directed toward National Multiple Births Awareness Day (NMBAD) 2007 in two distinct areas. I'll address one area here; the other is discussed in the NMBAD column in this edition of Multiple Moments.

In February, I produced a "Letter to the Editor" encouraging multiples to tell us their story. As I write this column, over 400 news outlets have been sent this letter; it has already appeared in dozens of publications resulting in some very interesting letters. For the record, I am at the mid-point of this task and hope that by this summer I will have contacted 1,000 outlets.

Two interesting connections from this letter campaign include email conversations with a single mom of 20-year-old twin girls and another with adult twins born in 1949. Some of their comments will appear in the media kit backgrounder. I'd like to share parts of my conversation with the adult twins because it highlights the importance of our work for MBC.

From Catherine and Constance: *In our hometown (in Manitoba) we are still referred to as "the twins". We were fraternal twins. To be so similar in looks lasted well into our adulthood. We thought people were silly not to be able to tell us apart. We never felt "the same" as each other. Trying to understand friends and relatives' dilemmas about which twin we were was a futile exercise.*

My response: *You say that you are "fraternal" (dizygotic) twins, yet your letter leads me to think you are "identical" (monozygotic). Why is it that you think you are "fraternal"?*

From Catherine: *It is possible that the knowledge about twin births in 1949 in a small town might have created an "assumption" that we were fraternal because of the two placentas. From what I am (now) reading on the Internet though, two placentas (or amniotic sacs) doesn't necessarily mean the twins are fraternal. A little bit of excitement here!!*

My response: *Here's something you may not have come across today—www.multiplebirth.com—Dr. Louis Keith and his twin Donald have been tested quite a few times to assess their twinship. Sometimes the results are monozygotic, sometimes the opposite (dizygotic). Dr. Keith says this is understandable because the only time that you are truly identical is at the moment the egg splits. After that, all your genetic experiences are as individuals—so there will be constant change for each.*

From Catherine: *Well, that was an unusual and thought-provoking day for Connie and me! We are very impressed with your handling of our letter and your attentive follow-up. Thank you! Connie is amazed at the zygosity information you sent us. It seems to me now that unless there was a camera in the womb when the egg—or eggs—split, the issue of "identical" or "fraternal" when we were born was based on two placentas.*

It's these one-on-one connections that reward me and will energize you if you are considering becoming a member of the MBC Board of Directors. Hint! Hint!



Vicki Riley, BUSINESS SERVICES MANAGER
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Summer is almost here; we are breaking out the soccer shoes, lacrosse sticks and sandals. I love summer in Wasaga Beach, even if we don't spend as much time at the beach as we used to. I am looking forward to the long, hot summer days and warm nights, but most of all, I am looking forward to our annual camping trip with our friends from my local chapter, Barrie Parents of Twins and More. We are booked at Grundy Lake in the #2 group campsite from August 8th to the 15th. Join us if you can!

Here is a quick review of some of the Business Office statistics from the last few months:

On our toll-free line, the Business Office received 63 incoming calls in January, 25 in February and 32 in March. As you must have heard, sextuplets were born to a family in Vancouver in January. This spectacular event sparked much interest in the media world and when they "googled" for statistics, they found Multiple Births Canada. The phone was ringing at all hours of the day and night. I was able to filter the calls through to the appropriate national Directors and qualified volunteers. It was an exciting couple of weeks; making connections across Canada with various media outlets and referring media, support workers and families to chapters and non-member groups.

February referrals to local chapters and non-member groups: 4 referrals to member chapters (1 Brampton, 1 Kitchener/Waterloo, 1 Windsor/Esex, 1 Newmarket) and 12 referrals to non-member groups (3 Toronto, 1 Kingston area, 3 Burlington/Hamilton, 1 Mississauga, 1 Manitoba, 1 Halifax, 1 PoCoMo [BC], 1 Niagara). March: 15 referrals to member chapters (1 Brant, 1 Guelph/Wellington, 1 Kitchener/Waterloo, 3 Newmarket, 2 Barrie, 3 Brampton, 3 Durham, 1 London) and 11 referrals to non-member groups (1 Montreal, 6 Toronto, 1 Burlington/Hamilton, 3 Mississauga). April: 4 referrals to member chapters (1 Durham, 3 Brampton) and 8 referrals to non-member groups (1 Calgary, 2 Montreal, 1 Ottawa, 1 Burlington/Hamilton, 1 Orangeville, 1 Fraser Valley, 1 Toronto). The MBC office refers through telephone conversations, email and written information included with orders. We feel that the referral numbers are usually lower for our member chapters because their contact information is easily found on the MBC website under Locate a Chapter. Non-member groups are also listed on the MBC website but under the Website Links page under Multiple Birth Organizations.

MBC has many publications and offers a 20% discount for members. For up-to-date information, please refer to the website. These include Multiple Moments (quarterly magazine – half price for members!), Booklets (13), Pamphlets (3), Support Kits (6), Fact Sheets (60+; free downloads for members!) and exclusive offers of outside publications (books).

As you are aware, the 2007 MBC Conference was held in Kitchener, Ontario at the end of May. I was thrilled to meet some national volunteers that I work with almost daily but have never met face-to-face. This is an important annual event that helps connect chapters to each other and chapter volunteers to national volunteers.

Have a great summer everyone. I wish you multiple days of sunshine!



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Editor...
From the

Meredith Fraser-Ohman, MULTIPLE MOMENTS EDITOR

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A Spring of Welcome Firsts

As we go to print with this issue of Multiple Moments, I've taken some time to look back on this spring, which has been unlike any other for our family. We have experienced numerous "firsts"—most of which have been wonderful milestones. Our fraternal (trizygotic) triplets turned five in April, and in addition to hosting their friends for their own birthday party, Everett, Madelynn and Nadia have been regular guests at schoolmates' parties. In most cases, the kids' friends (and their parents) have no idea that our kids are triplets; last names are not included on the class phone list, and their fraternal nature makes it hard to tell they're related. One of the "firsts" we encountered recently was a single birthday party invitation—for Everett, and not his sisters. Everett was thrilled; Madelynn and Nadia were bewildered and somewhat indignant. To my horror, the girls even ambushed the birthday boy Jared the next day at school, informing him that he had to "give us an invitation too, because we live in the same house as Everett and we're his sisters." Jared's mother and I had a good chuckle over that, and we decided to keep the guest list as-is; only Everett went, and he benefitted from a totally new experience attending a party without his sisters.

Our kids are finishing up their first year of school in Junior Kindergarten, another "first" for this spring. They also gave their first school concert, which, as those of you who have been through this inaugural rite of passage know, is simultaneously heart-warming and hilarious. One aspect my husband and I had not considered, however, is the skillful eye-roving ability required of multiple-birth parents in the audience. As all the kids came out and lined up on stage, my husband, my Mom and I noticed (with whispered praise for the teacher) that our three were not grouped together, but were instead dispersed throughout their classmates. But our gratitude soon turned to stress as we frantically looked from one child to the next and the next, giving encouraging smiles and tiny waves. From the first off-key note that rang out, the three of us were on a constant vigil to ensure all three kids received generous eye contact and acknowledgement from Mommy, Daddy and Gram. There were times when I would look from Madelynn to Nadia to Everett, only to return my gaze to Madelynn and find her face full of sadness because I hadn't been looking at her. A big smile and thumbs-up from me was the easy remedy. Another small, unforeseen challenge of parenting multiples!

This spring also offered some "firsts" for Multiple Moments. The magazine survived its first issue with me at the helm—although I must admit I had lots of help from Vicki behind the scenes. We also published our first Reader Poll, and the level of response we received was fabulous. Check out our informal results on page 9, and be sure to respond to this issue's poll.

I'd also like to introduce another first: a new column entitled From My Perspective. We realize that Multiple Moments offers plenty of advice and information from parents of multiples, but it doesn't have a voice from multiple-birth children themselves—at least not on a regular basis. Imagine—we, as parents, might actually learn something from our children. And so, I am putting out a call for authors: teenagers and older multiple-birth individuals who would like to write something for Multiple Moments. This is your chance to tell us, the parents, what life is like for you. Your writing can be a single article, or you can become a regular contributor (just think how good that will look on your résumé!).

We want to hear your voices. Send your articles directly to me at mmeditor@multiplebirthscanada.org.

I hope you enjoy this issue of Multiple Moments, and I wish you a fantastic summer.

Cheers, *Meredith*

MBC would like to thank its Sustaining Members for their added support:

Diane Nelson	Grande Prairie, AB	Donna Launslager	Waterloo, ON
Bonnie Schultz	Gormley, ON	Diane Myers	Moffat, ON
Kimberley Weatherall	Orleans, ON		

Multiple Births Canada would like to thank the following individuals and organizations:

- **Temiskaming Chapter** for sponsoring Gail Moore, MBC Vice-Chair, to attend the International Congress of Twin Studies in Ghent, Belgium in June 2007.
- **Chatham-Kent Chapter** for donating profits from the 2006 Conference to assist with the purchase of the Business Office laptop.
- **EMD Serono Canada Inc.** for their donation to assist with core business operations.
- **Candi Cuppage** for her successful fundraising initiatives through various sources.
- **Martin Hassam** (Vicki Riley's father) for assisting with office-related work—folding, stuffing and sealing envelopes.

The MBC Board is sad to say goodbye to the following national volunteers:

- **Sheri Franklin** has supported MBC for many years in her role as Chapter Liaison and Lone Parenting Chair. Sheri has been instrumental in getting a number of new Chapters off the ground by providing encouragement, information and overall support. In 2006, Sheri led a great team of volunteers in hosting our national AGM and Conference while expecting her newest addition to her family. While we will miss Sheri, we know that she will continue to offer her support to her local Chapter in Chatham-Kent, Ontario.
- **Lori MacEwen** has supported MBC for the past two years in her role as Volunteer Coordinator. Lori has done a fantastic job looking after the MBC Volunteers from their application process right through to ensuring they received appropriate recognition throughout the year, as well as at our annual Volunteer Recognition Ceremony at the MBC Conference. We wish Lori the very best with her future activities.

Thank you