



MOMS CLUB OF WEST CHESTER: BACK ROW: KIM PETROS, KATHY LAMON, KATHY PUNDETT, FRANKIE BROWN, KATHY PUNDETT, FRANKIE BROWN, KATHY PUNDETT, FRANKIE BROWN. FRONT ROW: KIM PETROS, KATHY LAMON, KATHY PUNDETT, FRANKIE BROWN, KATHY PUNDETT, FRANKIE BROWN, KATHY PUNDETT, FRANKIE BROWN.

Local MOMS Clubs Offer Support + Place to Unwind

"It gives me a chance to get out and be with other moms that get my life."

CONNECTING MOMS

ARTICLE BY A.J. LAPE | PHOTOGRAPHY PROVIDED BY MOMS CLUBS OF WEST CHESTER + LIBERTY TOWNSHIP

In the history of the recorded world, one of the three-lettered words with the most influence is Mom. She's a counselor, nurse, chauffeur, top chief and mediator of conflict. But through the rewards of motherhood are immeasurable, juggling all these balls can sometimes stretch a mother too thin when she hears, "Mom!" on a 24/7 loop. For at-home moms to relieve stress and link up with others like her, local mothers have two choices that can help—the MOMS Club of West Chester and the MOMS Club of Liberty Township.

Named with an acronym for Moms Offering Moms Support, the club was founded in the mid-80s, specifically to support at-home mothers. It has since grown to be an international network. Kim Petros, the Liberty Township branch president, says their club has coordinators who plan activities, and they typically occur in the morning. "The rule for all activities, no matter what it is, is people can bring a Mom's Night Out, the mom knows she can bring her children regardless, she can come even if she can't find a sitter."

Activities for Liberty Township MOMS are Kids Day Out, Mom and

Tots Lunch, Coffee and Conversation, Music and Movement, Outdoor Exploration, Kids' Crafts, Moms and Motion, Kids in the Kitchen, Story Time, Kids Science and Family Nights. Kim adds, "We have a monthly social open to the public. So a person who's interested in the group can try it out before they commit."

MOMS Clubs are not only a support system and place for kids to socialize, but they also offer an opportunity to participate in service projects to benefit needy children in the area. Each club has a budget, and money flows back into their communities.

This year, Liberty Township's support went to Hope's Closet, Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank and Reach Out Lakota.

The West Chester chapter convenes at the Boys & Girls Club of West Chester/Liberty for a Monthly Mingle. President Nicole Wells says, "This meeting serves as our whole group, monthly business meeting and new member interest session. We always have snacks, coffee, a craft for the kids, toys to play with and access to a fenced-in playground area."

A former swim coach and special education teacher, Nicole shares, "The club was really how I found my place as a mom. When I had my first



Kids' crafts with MOMS Club of Liberty Township



Dinner + fun with MOMS Club of West Chester

A group of 2019 West Chester Monks Club members posing in front of the West Chester Fire Department.



daughter, I was home, and I didn't know what to do. So meeting a network of other people who were going through the same motherhood journey and finding events and things to do, I immediately felt like I was not alone. I was part of something. I was part of a community. I was part of a family. I was part of a team. I was part of a West Chester Monks Club's biggest service project. This year's April auction supported Warm Widelanes Foster Care Outreach.

Since May is the month to celebrate mothers, the West Chester and Liberty township chapters will combine for a free public Mother's Day event at the Port of West Chester. The event will feature a variety of activities, including a live performance by the West Chester Monks Club. There will be break-out sessions for moms and games. Interested moms are asked to email if they plan to attend.

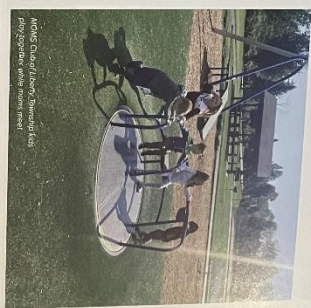
Nicole, another mom to Abigail, Madeline and Emily, claims the MONKS Club outings are some of her best memories of kids that were born. "I was the same age when I joined," she says. "They have just grown up together and had things that are now in similar age to my other two girls. Going on those park play dates and getting to experience the outdoors, you just feel like you're part of something. It's not just a group of friends, it's a family. I've known to Charlie and Maggie. Kim claims the adult interaction is what influenced her to join.

"I think for me, being a mom you get very lonely being at home with your kids all day, and you need to get out and see other moms and be with other moms that get it. It's like, and you know the struggle of keeping the house clean," she shares. "Your friends make friends with other kids. I think you feel like you can breathe again."

By visiting the MONKS Club group pages on 2020 Chapter nationwide membership information is available online. Each chapter has a set annual fee. The Liberty chapter's fee is \$20, and West Chester's is \$25. Scholarships are available.

MONKS Club

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MONKS Club Liberty Township kids posing for a group photo at a picnic.



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