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Greater Nashua Mothers Club Membership Handbook

PREFACE

We have put together this Handbook to provide Club members with reference and general information about the Greater Nashua Mothers Club. It is our hope that it will give a clear overview of the workings of our organization and the many benefits available to members.

More specific information on Club happenings can be found in our monthly newsletter “Homefront”.

If you have further questions, feel free to contact the Membership Coordinator or any Board member. The names and phone numbers of current Board members and program coordinators can be found in each issue of our newsletter, “Homefront”.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Greater Nashua Mothers’ Club was founded in 1988 to provide families with opportunities for social contact. In addition to providing social contact for families in the greater Nashua area, the Club acts as a resource for parents on topics such as home safety, nutrition, education, discipline and other parenting issues. The Club also provides activities and outings which encourage participation by both parents and children.

Featured guest speakers keep members informed and educated on a wide variety of topics such as toddler discipline and nutrition to name a few. Members are encouraged to participate in Playgroups, Moms’ Night Out, Babysitting Co-op and Toy Co-op. There is also a new Moms’ Support Group and Book Club.

The Mothers’ Club exists for the benefit of its members. New activities and procedures are adopted as the needs of the membership change and grow. We always welcome suggestions and feedback about the Club.

If you have any questions about the Greater Nashua Mothers’ Club, or would like additional information, contact: Membership Coordinator, The Greater Nashua Mothers’ Club, PO Box 124, Nashua, NH 03061 or visit our website at www.greaternashuamothersclub.com

BY LAWS

The By-Laws, the rules and regulations by which the Club is governed, is a six-page document and thus too lengthy to include in this Handbook. To request a copy, contact the Club’s Secretary and she will be happy to send it to you.

SUMMARY OF ARTICLES IN THE BY-LAWS:

Article I: Name. The name of this organization shall be The Greater Nashua Mothers' Club, which is an incorporated, not-for-profit corporation.

Article II: Purpose. This section states that the purpose of functions and group meetings are to promote social interaction and companionship for mothers and children in an atmosphere free from commercial pressure. No one may use their membership for personal gain. Therefore, the following activities are prohibited:

Product demonstration parties at any Club-sponsored event or group meeting, unless such activity has been specifically approved for the purpose of raising funds for the Club or a designated charity.

Use of membership lists for the purpose of solicitation of any products not specifically approved for the purpose of raising funds for the Club or a designated charity.

Article III: Membership. This section deals with eligibility and Club dues. Membership in the Club shall be open to any person residing in Nashua or its surrounding Towns who is a parent, expectant parent or legal guardian of a child.

Article IV: Officers. The Officers of the Club are the President, Playgroup Coordinator, Secretary and Treasurer. This section deals with Election of Officers, Vacancies, and Candidates.

Article V: Administrative Board. This article sets the Board positions and defines the Executive Committee and powers of the Board. It also deals with meetings, quorum, removal and resignations.

Article VI: Duties of Officers and Administrative Board Members. Duties for each position are spelled out in this section.

Article VII: Meetings. This section deals with Board Meetings, Annual Meetings and Special Meetings.

Article VIII: Committees. Each year, a Finance Committee and an Auditing Committee must be appointed by the Club President. The function of the Finance Committee is to prepare the budget for the coming year. The function of the auditing Committee is to review the Club's financial records for the past year.

Article IX: Execution of Instruments. Grants authority to an individual appointed by the Administrative Board to execute specific contracts on behalf of the Club.

Article X: Parliamentary Authority. States that our Club is governed by the rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the by-laws and any special rules the Club may adopt.

Article XI: Policies. States the procedures to be followed when instituting new Club policies.

Article XII: Amendments to By-Laws. States the procedures to be followed should an amendment be necessary.

BABYSITTING CO-OP GUIDELINES

The Babysitting Co-op is open to any member who desires a babysitting service not based on money. Any member of the Greater Nashua Mothers' Club may join. Contact the Babysitting Co-op Coordinator to find out the current rules for Babysitting Co-op, and how to join.

Mothers' Day Out Program

Mothers' Day Out ("MDO") is a form of "drop-off" babysitting. A day is scheduled to allow Co-op members to drop off their child(ren) for 4 hours – FREE. Moms can use this time for whatever they desire. It's great to go shopping, or make appointments or just to be home relaxing! How many children are being dropped off will dictate how many moms are needed to babysit (usually one mom per three children). This is done on a volunteer basis as is hosting MDO. Members participating in MDO are required to work (ie. Babysit) periodically.

CHARITABLE WORK

The Greater Nashua Mothers' Club recognizes the importance of supporting local charities and contributing to our community. Many of our members know that one of the best ways to teach compassion and sharing to our children is through example.

Each year, a list of eligible charities will be reviewed by the membership. This will be done at the Annual Meeting held in February. At that time, the membership will have the opportunity to determine one or several charities it would like to assist during that year. The form of assistance will also be determined by consensus at the Annual Meeting. Assistance may take the form of a: Food drive, Holiday toy drive for needy children, Adopt a Family Program, or any other method the membership agrees on.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The Club provides a wide range of activities. The Activities Coordinator(s) arrange for specific Kids Activities during the month as well as a Moms' Night Out. A Calendar of Club Events is included each month in the newsletter. Specific information on each event is written up in the Club Notices section of the newsletter specifying the contact person.

The Club activities may include:

- Book Discussion Group
- Special field trips for school age kids
- Holiday and Seasonal parties
- Kids Outings
- Moms' Nights Out
- Special events with featured guest speakers on topics of interest to members
- Working Moms Events

A wide range of activities is planned in an effort to provide something of interest to everyone. One of our main functions as a club is to provide social interaction and networking for our members. By having a wide variety of activities, we hope to make it easier for members to find others with the same schedules and interests.

It is important for members to RSVP if they plan on attending Club activities. Should there be a change of plan or cancellation, the Coordinator only notifies the members who have RSVP'd.

FUNDRAISING

A large portion of the revenue received from the Club dues is allocated to the basic expenses of running our organization. The dues taken in each year does not even cover the newsletter costs. In addition, funds are needed for other areas such as insurance, bank and state fees, rental of our post office box, stationery and office supplies. Once these expenses are met, there are no funds for our special events and annual parties.

Our fundraising efforts are undertaken almost exclusively for the purpose of funding our special events, i.e., Fall Festival, Winter Festival, and Summer Festival as well as helping the Club pay fees for special speakers and the rental of facilities for special meetings and events.

Our Fundraising Coordinator organizes several fundraising events during the year. These may take the form of:

- Yard Sale
- Raffle
- Catalog fundraising items
- Charity Night at the Pheasant Lane Mall
- Other fundraising programs the Coordinator deems appropriate

As with any other area of the Club, participation in these fundraising efforts is strictly voluntary and no member should feel obligated or pressured into participating.

HELPING HANDS

The Helping Hands Program was created to help families in a crisis situation. We recognize the fact that many of our members do not have families living nearby to offer physical support in times of need. Volunteers are available to assist Club members in the following ways: Preparing and delivering a meal; emergency babysitting; running errands; or just a friendly visit.

Any current Club member can receive Helping Hands assistance. The following situations are covered under this program:

Mother adjusting to a newborn at home: Meal assistance provided in the following manner. Member can choose to have up to three meals delivered (a) all in one week; or (b) spread out over a two-week period. During the first two weeks at home with a newborn, the member can ask for assistance with errands.

Club member with a serious illness or hospitalization: Meals assistance will be provided on an as needed basis, as well as emergency babysitting and errands.

Death in the family: Meals, babysitting, errands and whatever support is needed will be provided to a Club member in the event of a death in the family.

Moving: Moving can be very unsettling for mothers with small children. Assistance provided can include delivery of a meal during the first week in a new home and babysitting during the move.

Other Family Crisis: These will be determined on a situation by situation basis. The type of assistance offered will be determined between the member and the Helping Hands Coordinator with the assistance of the Executive Board.

To get assistance: The member should feel free to contact the Helping Hands Coordinator directly. However, a member may not feel comfortable asking for assistance. Any Club member who knows of another member who could use a helping hand is encouraged to contact the Helping Hands Coordinator.

MEETINGS

Administrative Board Meetings

Each month an Administrative Board Meeting is scheduled for the First Wednesday evening at 7pm at the Nashua Public Library. Notification is published in the newsletter. Members of the Board get together to discuss and plan the Club's activities for the upcoming month, plan future events, listen to monthly reports given by Coordinators of each area of the Club and consider any new business brought before the Board.

Any Club member who would like to find out how decisions are made, become more involved with the Club and in general learn what is discussed at these meetings is welcome to attend.

Special Event Meetings

These meetings are held separate and apart from the Administrative Board. The purpose of the Special Event Meeting is purely social and informative. We try to book a speaker to present a topic of interest to our membership, usually a parenting topic. The presentation is then followed by social time where members can continue the discussion or just relax, chat and get to know other members in a relaxed atmosphere.

NEW MOMS SUPPORT GROUP

The New Moms Support Group is a great way for new mothers to meet. Under the direction of the New Moms Coordinator, monthly events are planned with moms and infants (usually up to twelve months of age). The meetings act as an outlet for the parent rather than a playgroup for the child.

Members can share their experiences and offer support to each other during this transition into motherhood.

The New Moms Support Group acts as a catalyst for playgroups. As the children get older (usually around one year), members with same age children can spin off and form an official playgroup.

This is a group constantly in transition, with new members coming in and those with older children moving on to form playgroups. It provides a wonderful opportunity for new mothers to have social interaction with other mothers.

NEWSLETTER

The Club publishes a newsletter "Homefront" ten times a year. Subscription to the newsletter is included in the membership dues. Each issue provides members with information on club news and activities for the month, as well as useful information for mothers, ideas for fun with kids, recall information, informative articles, local events and more.

Submissions to the newsletter are encouraged. Any member who wants to contribute an article, tip, recommendations, etc. should contact the Newsletter Coordinator(s).

Advertising is accepted providing it meets certain criteria. Any member may place an ad to sell children's toys or equipment free of charge.

Members may also place an ad for any business or service. The cost to members is \$5 for a business card size ad. Non-members may also advertise in the newsletter. To find out more information on advertising, contact the Advertising Coordinator or the Newsletter Coordinator.

NURSING HOME VISITS

As part of our commitment to community involvement, seasonal visits to local area nursing homes are scheduled. The purpose of these visits is to create a little diversion for some of our senior citizens.

Many residents in nursing homes don't have families with young children that visit them, and many of our members live a great distance from their elder relations, thus we are good for each other. These visits give children a chance to interact with the elderly, who just love to see small children and fuss over them.

The visits are usually held in a community room at a nursing home and usually last for about 30 minutes to an hour. This can be a very rewarding experience for any member willing to invest the time.

PLAYGROUPS

A playgroup is a wonderful means of establishing a support network of friends and a social environment for our children. It provides members the opportunity to share their parenting experiences and to seek out others' experiences. Children learn to play with others and form their own friendships. In return, the playgroup needs commitment from its members.

Our goal is to establish successful playgroups. To help attain this goal, we are providing the following guidelines which we feel, based on our own experiences, are the fundamentals of successful playgroups.

Guidelines

- Upon deciding to join a playgroup the member is expected to take a turn at providing snacks and beverages for both the members and the children.
- Each member is expected to host playgroup in his/her home on a regular, rotating basis, as well as provide snacks and beverages for both the members and the children. (Exceptions can be made if this poses a real hardship.)
- If a playgroup is involved in any other activity, such as a craft, each member is also responsible for taking a turn at such activity.
- Each member is expected to arrive on time and stay for the scheduled playgroup time.
- Members are expected to commit to attending playgroup regularly. Please call the host if for some reason you are unable to attend.
- Each member should bring and be responsible for his/her own child(ren).
- Due to insurance liability, non-members can not attend or visit any playgroup.
- Members are expected to help clean up the host home at the end of playgroup.
- Each playgroup should give careful consideration to their groups' individual policy for celebrating special occasions such as birthdays and holidays.
- Members and/or their children are asked not attend playgroup if they have symptoms of a contagious illness.
- It is suggested that there be no smoking during playgroup.
- Members are expected to monitor the behavior of their child(ren). Aggressive behavior is discouraged.
- Any problems occurring in a playgroup should be brought to the immediate attention of the Playgroup Coordinator
- The Playgroup Coordinator has the option to temporarily place children in a playgroup if there is no other alternative.

- Every year each playgroup must complete and submit the “Individual Playgroup Rules” form to the Playgroup Coordinator.

Playgroup Leader’s Responsibilities

- The leader is considered the liaison between an individual playgroup and the Playgroup Coordinator.
- The leader will be contacted if any information (i.e. fundraising, special events) needs to be given to their playgroup. The leader is expected to share this information with their playgroup.
- The leader is responsible for keeping track of which days are good for the playgroup to meet and keeping track of home rotation.
- The leader is responsible for keeping in touch with the Playgroup Coordinator regarding schedule and member changes.
- The leader is responsible for contacting the Playgroup Coordinator if any issues arise in a playgroup that need sorting out, and submitting the “Individual Playgroup Rules” form.

Playgroup / Club Policy

The following is a formal policy of the Greater Nashua Mothers’ Club prohibiting demonstrations at playgroups:

- It is the purpose of the Club functions and group meetings to promote social interaction and companionship for members and children in an atmosphere free from commercial pressure. Therefore, it is our policy that no one may conduct a product demonstration party at any Club sponsored event or group meeting unless such activity has been specifically approved for the purpose of raising funds for the Club or a designated charity.

TOY CO-OP

In September of 1992, the Club opened its Toy Co-op. The Toy Co-op is a lending library for toys free of charge to all members. Borrowing toys allows parents to vary the toys a child plays with, to try out toys before making a purchase or to borrow items needed on a short term basis. There are also a few adult size seasonable costumes (Santa and Easter Bunny suits) as well as a lending library of parenting books and pamphlets.

- The Toy Co-op is open only to Greater Nashua Mothers’ Club members.
- Dates, time and location are published in the Club’s newsletter.
- Each member may be expected to occasionally work during the Toy Co-op opening hours.
- Parents may select up to two catalogue items per child to be checked out at any given time.
- Toys are circulated for a maximum of one month.
- Toys must be returned in the condition in which they were checked out. Normal wear and tear is recognized as part of borrowing toys.
- If damage occurs beyond normal wear and tear, the borrower may be asked to repair or replace the toy.

Donations

Most of the toys in the Toy Co-op have been donated. We accept donations during regular Toy Co-op hours or by appointment with the Coordinator. Because the Toy Co-op cannot guarantee toys will be returned in their original condition, we do not accept loaned toys. In addition to toys, we also accept books, magazines, brochures, videos, etc. for the Parent Resource Library.

WORKING MOMS GROUP

The Working Moms Group was formed to give working mothers an opportunity for social interaction both for themselves and for their children. The Club recognizes the fact that the majority of working mothers would not be able to take part in organized playgroups and activities during the day. This group was created to fill that need.

Activities for this group are planned by the Working Moms Coordinator. Scheduled on weekends, mothers can attend open playgroups, activities or outings with other working mothers and their children.