

Mommy's Time Out

December 2015



Lakewood Ranch

MOMS
GROUP

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Thanks to our contributors this month: Becky Hartman, Jenn Otterness, Jennifer Kovatch, Jill Bennett, Karen Moore, Leslie Toscano, Lisa O'Driscoll, Melinda Hierholzer, Stacey Burge, Tara Sambuca-Duarte, Tracie McHugh and Victoria Cobb

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy holidays, y'all!

The craziest, busiest and most fun time is upon us. We are kicking off this weekend with our Sunday with Santa! I really hope you all enjoy this weekend's event - we have worked hard to make it special and memorable for you and your little ones! I personally can't wait for this one because my eldest is finally excited and understands the whole Christmas/Santa/family fun time thing! Which also means the "be good - Santa is watching!" bribes have begun in my house. Hey—whatever works, right?

So while our schedules all may be pretty full in the next few weeks with upcoming holidays, I look forward to a month packed with great events for January. In anticipation of everyone's new year's resolutions, I have some health and fitness events and activities in the works. It's very exciting that our membership is at an all time high for this group, so I hope we have a great turn out! It really speaks volumes that our group consistently continues to grow - we have a wonderful, supportive and fun group of women!

Wishing you and yours a very, merry everything!

- Jill

A Warm Welcome To Our Newest Members



Danielle Morgan

Cassie Boyle

Jennifer Jovic

Amy Wallace

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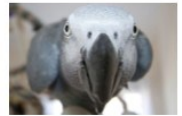
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Kids Outings: Melinda H.

Moms Night Out: Lisa O.

Preschool Picasso: Leslie T.

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Sunday with Santa

Sunday, December 6th

3:00PM-7:00PM

Lakewood Ranch Country Club

JOIN US FOR THIS WELL-LOVED, MAGICAL TRADITION. EACH CHILD WILL HAVE A MOMENT WITH SANTA TO RECEIVE THEIR FIRST GIFT OF THE SEASON & SHARE WITH HIM THEIR WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS MORNING.

EVENT HAS SOLD OUT!

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DROP OFF GIFTS BY DECEMBER 4TH

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Community Service News

During the last monthly meeting, the kids present created handmade greeting cards for other children in need. These will be filled with gift cards that your donations help us purchase. Our goal is to fill each of the 15 cards with a \$25 gift card.

If all of our members donated just \$2.00 each on our [website's donation button](#), by Dec. 5th, we'd reach our goal!



Preschool Picasso

Gift Bag Decorating

Tuesday, December 8th

@3:30PM

Adventure Park \$3/child



Gingerbread Decorating and
Playtime

Monday, December 21st

10:00AM

\$10/child

See facebook for availability



We hope to see you on
Thursday, December 17th

10:00AM to chat

10:30AM class starts

\$6/family

MONTHLY MEETING
WHITE ELEPHANT



GIFT EXCHANGE

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER
10TH AT 7PM**

ED'S TAVERN

BRING A GIFT AT OR AROUND
\$15 TO EXCHANGE

Dad's Day Out!

**Enjoy some football,
beer and bar food with
the guys**

World Of Beer

**Sunday, December 19th
at 1PM**



Kids Outing

**Ice Skating at Ellenton
Ice and Sports Complex
Tuesday, December 22nd
10:00AM**



Moms Night Out

**Thursday, December 17th
7-9PM**

Let's Create Art



December 2015



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5 Venice Boat Parade @6PM
6 	7	8 Preschool Picasso @3:30PM	9	10 Monthly Meeting @7PM	11 Holidays Around the Ranch @6PM	12
13	14	15	16 Book Club @7PM	17 Fun to be Fit @10AM MNO@7PM	18	19 Braden River Library Holiday Party @11AM
20	21 PlayAway Event @10AM	22 Kids Outing @10AM	23	24	25 	26
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

RECIPE BOX

It's cookie pants season.
Here are the reasons to break out the elasticized waistbands.

S'mores Cookies

- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cups flour
- 2/3 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup graham cracker cereal
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- 1 cup chocolate chips



Preheat oven to 350.

Combine butter, both sugars and beat until creamy and light in color.

Add the eggs one at a time, then vanilla and scrape down the sides of the bowl.

In a small bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt.

Slowly add into the mixer until well combined.

Stir in marshmallows, chocolate chips and graham cracker cereal

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and scoop 1/4c mixture and form a ball and place on the baking sheet. Gently press down so the bottom is a bit flat and space cookies 3 inches apart.

Bake for 15-18 minutes or until set.

Remove and allow to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before moving to a rack to cool completely. Makes 12..

Oreo Stuffed Chocolate Chip Cookies



- 2 sticks (1 cup) softened butter
- 3/4 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tablespoon pure vanilla
- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 10 oz bag chocolate chips
- 1 pkg. Oreo cookies

Preheat oven to 350. Cream butter and sugars together with a mixer until well combined. Beat in eggs and vanilla.

In a separate bowl, mix the flour, salt and baking soda. Slowly add to wet ingredients along with chocolate chips until just combined.

Using a cookie scoop, take one scoop of cookie dough and place it on top of an Oreo cookie. Take another scoop of cookie dough and place on the bottom of the Oreo cookie. Seal the edges together by pressing and cupping in hand until Oreo is enclosed with dough.

Place onto parchment paper or Silpat lined baking sheet and bake cookies for 9-13 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool for 5 minutes before transferring to a cooling rack.

(NOTE: some bakers have had trouble with their dough spreading too much during cooking. If that is a problem, throw the dough balls in the fridge for a quick chill before back into the oven.)

Makes about 2 dozen cookies

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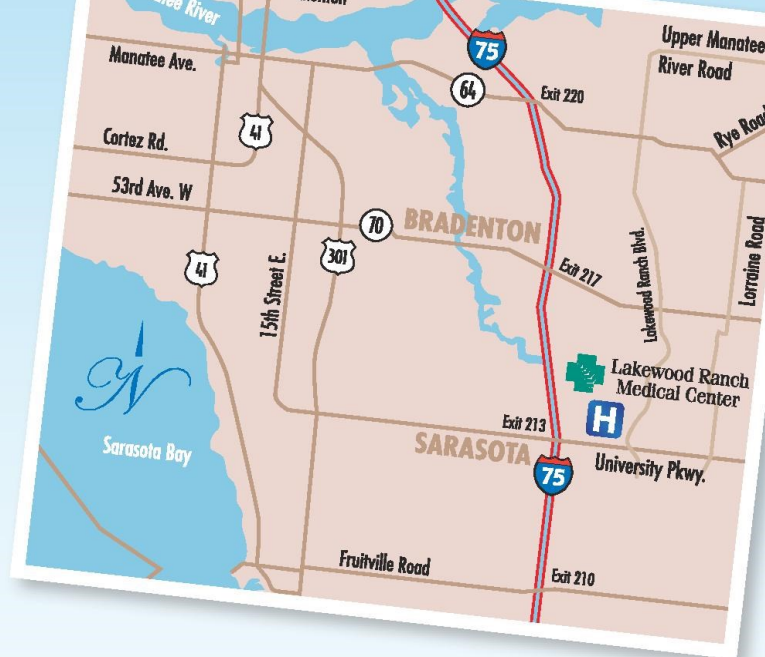
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Lakewood Ranch Medical Center

Emergency Department

www.lakewoodranchmedicalcenter.com



SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

Manatee County Public Schools

November 11th—No School (Veterans' Day)

November 20—Early Release (Elementary Only)

November 23-27—No School (Thanksgiving Break)

Freedom Elementary:

November 30-December 4—Book Fair

December 10—Snacks with Santa (6:30-8:30 p.m.)

Gene Witt Elementary:

December 4—Frosty's Freeze Dance and Santa's Workshop (6:30-9:00 p.m.)

Gullett Elementary:

December 15—Music Program (5th Grade)

December 16—3rd Grade Field Trip to Dakin Dairy Farms

McNeal Elementary:

November 30-December 4—Holiday Shop

December 1—Teachers' Helping Hands (8:45 a.m.)

December 2—School Store Open (8:00 a.m.)

December 2—Holiday Music Program with Timmy Abell

December 4—Runners Club (7:50 a.m.)

December 11—Runners Club (7:50 a.m.)

December 15—3rd Grade Concert (6:30 p.m.)

December 18—Runners Club (7:50 a.m.)

Rowlett Academy:

December 1—Health Screening (K,1,3)

December 1—RFA/SAC

December 3—Kindergarten Holiday Program

December 9—Board Meeting (5:30 p.m.)

December 16—Art Reception

December 17—Holiday Show at Southeast High School

Wakeland Elementary:

December 4—Volunteer Work Day (8:45 a.m.)

December 5—Jingle Bell Run at Lakewood Ranch Main Street (6:00 p.m.)

December 10—Kindergarten Dance Performance (10:00 a.m.)

December 14-18—Santa Shop

December 16-17—Holiday Shows

December 17—Student of the Month Celebration at Pirate City

Willis Elementary:

December 2—Runners Club (7:30 a.m.)

December 3—Picture Retakes

December 3—PTO Meeting (2:00 p.m.)

December 7-10—Gingerbread Shoppe

December 9—Runners Club (7:30 a.m.)

December 10—Night with Santa (5:00-7:00 p.m.)

December 16—Runners Club (7:30 a.m.)

Private Schools

The Classical Academy:

December 8—TCA Lecture Series "Can Art Survive Censorship?" (6:30-8:00 p.m.)

December 11—Christmas Carol Choir and Guitar Ensemble

January 5—Return to School

Out of Door Academy:

December 1—Taylor Emmons Wreath Sale and Distribution

December 1—Lower School Choral Performance (4:00 p.m.)

December 4—7th Grade Field Trip to O'Brien Family Farms

December 4—Parent Association Holiday Luncheon

December 8—Middle School Holiday Luncheon

December 9—Parent Association Coffee and Winter Decorating

December 9—Middle School College Information Night

December 12—Chorus Performances

December 17—5th Grade Field Trip to All Faiths Food Bank

December 17—Strings Concert

December 18—Holiday Break Begins at Noon

January 5—Return to School

St. Stephen's:

December 21-January 4—Christmas Break

Tabernacle Christian School:

December 11—Christmas Program (6:30 p.m.)

December 16—Spelling Bee (3rd through 8th grades) (12:30 p.m.)

December 18—Preschool Christmas Program (12:00 p.m.)

December 21-31—No School

January 5—Return to School

Local Preschools

Sprouts:

December 7—Staff Meeting (no lunch)

December 9—Early Release (no lunch)

December 16—Christmas Program (MWF classes)

December 17—Christmas Program (TuTh and VPK classes)

December 21-31—Christmas Break

January 5—Return to School

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Lack of emphasis on nutrition, wellness, disease prevention and behavior/stress management	Annual personalized health plan created for each child focused on dealing with nutrition, physical activity, stress management/ behavior
Having to come to the office for "everything"	Your choice of home visits (house calls), video, text, email, phone or traditional face to face visits
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SHE'S CRAFTY

Melted Peppermint Ornaments

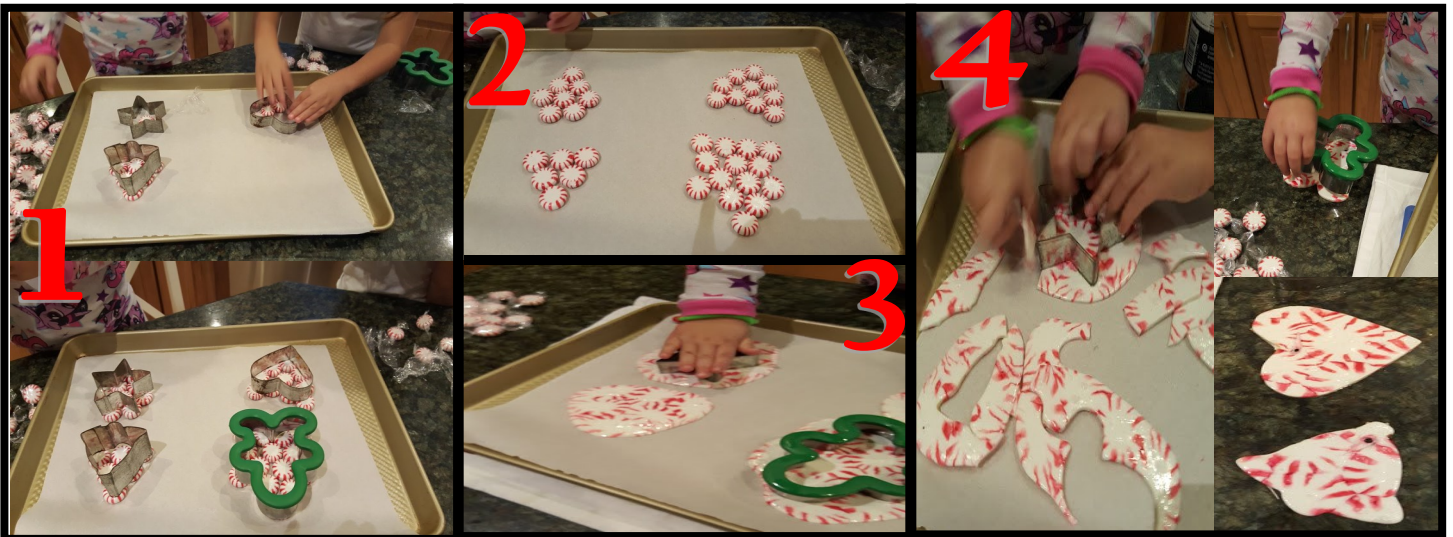


What you need:

- Starlight Peppermints
- Parchment paper lined cookie sheet
- Non-stick cooking spray
- Cookie cutters (simple shapes are best)
- A small round stick, straw, etc to make a hole at the top of your ornament

Begin by preheating your oven to 350. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.

1. Using your cookie cutter as a guide, lay out your candies into position to fill the space.
2. Remove the cookie cutters from the tray and put the mints into the oven for 10 minutes.
3. Once they have melted, press the cookie cutters that have been sprayed heavily with nonstick spray, into the candy. Let it sit and begin to reharden for 3-4 minutes. While waiting, gently press and twist stick in to create a hole and remove.
4. Now break off the edges, pick up the cookie cutter and gently press the candy through. Once removed, return to cookie sheet to completely cool.





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KIDS' BOOK CLUB

Here Comes Jack Frost



Here Comes Jack Frost by Kazuno Kohara is a winter tale about a lonely boy who wishes for something to do. When he meets Jack Frost, the last thing he expects is to make a new friend . . . or to discover how enchanting winter can be!

During the story, point out all of the fun activities that kids can do during winter...not that we can do those things here in Florida! You can also discuss the scenery: the leaves are missing from the trees, the animals are hibernating, birds are not seen, the snow covers the ground, etc. Help the children understand what happens when the weather gets chilly. Ask them how does nature change for the season?

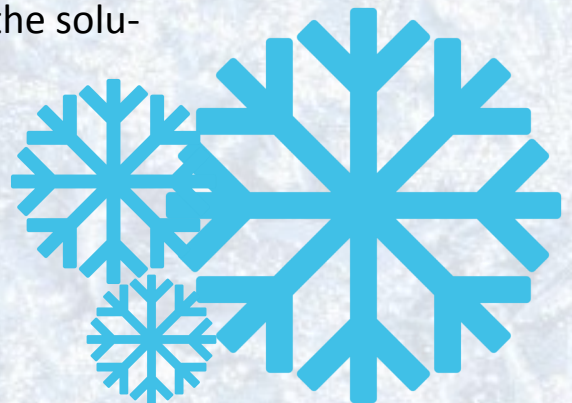
After reading the story, try creating your own frost with this simple recipe:

1/3 cup Epsom salt

2-3 drops dishwashing liquid

1/2 cup water

Make a super saturated solution by stirring the Epsom salts into warm tap water until it has dissolved completely. Add the dishwashing soap and stir again. Use a lens cloth, or other high density cloth, to wash the solution onto glass or mirror. Let it dry!





Fun: We believe that the primary reason children play sports is to have fun. They love mastering new skills, developing friendships, and healthy competition.

Inclusivity: That's our word for everyone's right to play and have fun.

Safety: Your child's safety is paramount. As such, we background check each of the adults supervising your children and hire trained officials for each game to ensure that "safe play" is enforced.

Good Sportsmanship: We believe that learning to play the game is only half the equation. Helping children develop character is the other half. The value of teaching children teamwork, fair play and good sportsmanship goes far beyond the game.

Healthy Competition: Competition is a natural instinct. However, the "win at all costs" mentality so prevalent in youth sports today is not only destructive to team morale, it can severely undermine individual self-esteem. We believe everyone should be both encouraged and given the opportunity to make the most of their abilities.

We are gearing up for our Winter Season to start on January 9th!

Use discount code "LWR Mom" to receive \$10.00 off!

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Baseball, Cheerleading, Flag Football and Soccer programs available
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Basketball is around the corner at Lakewood Ranch HS's outdoor court!



HEALTHY MAMAS

Could Your Child Live to Be 110 Years Old?

Isn't this the subject of a geriatrics article instead of pediatrics? Why is a pediatrician talking about longevity? Because believe it or not, your child may live to see his or her 110th birthday and you, as a parent, can have a big role in your child's ability to live a long and healthy life.

We live in extraordinary times! Thanks to medical, scientific and social sciences we know a lot more about what can prolong life and improve health. A study done by National Geographic in the early 2000s documented five areas in the world which had the highest concentration of people over 100 years old. These areas were called the "Blue Zones" and were located in Japan, Costa Rica, Sardinia, California and Greece. The study was trying to discover the one "silver bullet" that would be that "fountain of youth" we all read about in legends. However, what they found was that these centenarians not only had a long life but a very happy and healthy one. They managed to avoid chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke as well as steer clear of cancer, Alzheimer's and immune disorders. These societies shared common characteristics and lifestyles that made them more resilient than everyone else in the world. New fields like lifestyle medicine and longevity medicine have also added to the findings of the "blue zones".

What can we learn about the "Blue zones" and how can we apply that to our children?

As parents we want the best for our children. We provide the best education, we enroll them in extracurricular activities that will expand their opportunities in the future, provide financial support and want them to be healthy, most importantly. Thanks to the advances in the last 60 years: vaccines, modern medical care, and medications have almost wiped out the infections that seriously sickened and killed children prematurely in our grandparents' and great grandparents' days. Now the biggest health challenge facing our children's future is precisely cancer, heart problems, immune disorders and degenerative brain conditions like Alzheimer's. What we are finding out is that these conditions don't turn up

suddenly like pneumonia, a broken leg or appendicitis. They have their roots in childhood and only become apparent with symptoms later on in adulthood. What we know from the "blue zones" as well as a growing scientific body of evidence is that relatively simple interventions in childhood can totally prevent these very hard to treat diseases from developing in the first place.

What are these interventions?

Nutrition: food is more than fuel, food is medicine! There are lots of "diets" like the Mediterranean, Paleo, vegan, etc. Even though more research is needed to find if there is one better than another, most people agree that a diet low in sugar, high in plants, nuts, fruits, (good) fat and some protein is a good bet for health.

Stress management/positive attitude: The way we think and feel can actually increase disease fighting white blood cells, lower your blood pressure and decrease inflammation in your body. In addition to these long-term effects, children also experience immediate benefits such as improvements in math scores, better focus and self-control.

Physical activity/movement has huge health short-term and long-term benefits. It leads to higher academic performance in children, reduces the risk of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease. All this body of evidence points to the need for our children to eat well, move more, stress less. Easier said than done, right? In order to achieve this, you may want to partner with a physician that will take the time to create a personalized health plan while guiding and supporting you along the way. You can have a huge influence in your child's long term well-being by "maximizing their health" from an early age.



Xavier Sevilla MD FAAP
Board Certified Pediatrician
XCEL Pediatrics

WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Sunshine News!

Thank you hugely to all who delivered the many sunshine meals that went out this month! We've welcomed four new babies to the group in November: Triston James Harrell (born 11/5), Lily Marilyn Abrams (born 11/6), Cash Richard Birdsail (born 11/17) and Josephine Lou Wells (11/23). Congratulations to Kristen Abrams, Robin Harrell, Allison Birdsail and Megan Wells on these births; we're all looking forward to meeting your newest little ones soon. Thanks also to everyone who delivered sunshine meals to Julia Hendrix and the Hendrix Family in the beginning of the month when Julia went in for her surgery. And finally, thank you to everyone who has delivered meals to Karen Moore and the Moore Family while McKinley continues her treatments. The support you all give is simply awesome and very much appreciated



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30 kids participated in our Kids Outing in November! We took a trip to the Cookie Cottage where the kids were able to decorate an apron and then make some Thanksgiving themed cookies. It was great to see a lot of our older kids join us for this event too!



One of our moms hosted a great game night where members were able to have fun playing board games, chat and enjoy some time together without the kids.



Learn more about advertising or sponsoring opportunities with the Lakewood Ranch Moms Group on our website:

www.lwrmomsgroup.com

GUESS WHO

Member Spotlight



We asked you last month who this was a picture of and 84% of you knew this was Jennifer Kovatch, our treasurer. We gave her a series of sentence starters and asked her to finish each thought. Here are her answers:

Now that I have been a mom for more than 9 years: I know to cherish every single moment. The sleepless baby why-won't-my-infant-sleep-more-than-45-minutes-at-a-time nights that seem like agonizing torture go by so quickly and turn into 'why-is-my-9-yr-old-still-sleeping-at-9:45AM?-I-want-to-go-the-gym' in the blink of an eye.

I've come to realize that when I'm driving: I wish I had one of those chauffeured limo divider windows that I could put up or down at the touch of a button.

I've come to realize that I need: (1) 6+hours of uninterrupted sleep a night to feel human, (2) my kids to be polite and well-mannered in public, (3) a pedicure once every 2-3 months, and (4) every once in blue moon, to hear from another mom "you are doing a good job."

I've come to realize that I've lost: nothing. Despite fleeting moments of regret about giving up my career, or moving (twice) far away from extended family and dear friends, I'd do it all over again, exactly the same way. (Except maybe I wouldn't have been so helicoptery neurotic when my firstborn was an infant. Now that's she's a moody tween, I really don't think that helped her at all, in any way.)

I've come to realize that my mom: was right. Once you become a mom, you never, ever sleep as soundly again.

I've come to realize that people: can be cruel, or kind. That it just depends on the person, and that you really can't change that.

I've come to realize that I hate it when: well-intentioned moms judge other well-intentioned moms, and whenever anyone is unkind to someone else.

I've come to realize that I'll always be: worried, anxious and self-loathing about not doing enough for my family.

I've come to realize that my cell phone: is a clutch, an addiction, and a very bad influence on my kids.

I've come to realize that my house: is paradise, and I'm thankful for the chaos, mess, deafening sounds, and the quiet moments late at night when everyone except me is sleeping and I can tiptoe into their rooms, tuck them into bed and kiss their little heads.

I've come to realize that my children: are who they are, and have been from birth. I can guide them and steer them and teach them here and there, but each is her or his own person, and I will love them no matter what.



Which of our members is this a picture of as a child?

Take your guess [online!](#)

McKinley's Corner



It has been a crazy fast November to say the least. The first week we were put on a chemo "hold" because McKinley didn't make blood counts to start the second half of this intense phase of treatment.

They have to be a certain level per protocol. So I tried to take advantage as much as I could with only one clinic appt & physical therapy that week. I got my hair done for the first time in 6 months. Very exciting!!! We did find out at that appointment via ultrasound that her blood clot had completely dissipated! This was SUCH huge news & a HUGE surprise! The doctors were expecting it to still be there just smaller but it is GONE. The best part? No more blood thinner injections! This is a gigantic relief emotionally, physically & financially. For us to not have to give her two shots a day & NOT hear her beg for "no pokes!", well you ladies "get it" & it's a true blessing. One less thing she has to deal with. Thank God.

She made counts the following week & two intense weeks of treatments began. Monday through Thursday of three different chemos (including a surgery). Friday through Sunday off then back at it Monday through Thursday. In complete honesty she had a rough time. She's been getting sick more often, grouchy, not eating & only wanting to be held. But I still think in comparison to how other kids handle this treatment she has been a rockstar. So I'm very thankful for that. The doctors even said she was acting like a "typical ARC kid". (That's one of the new chemos & the one she received daily & I guess it just makes you feel yucky all over). We completed the two weeks on Nov 19th & have so far not needed any transfusions OR had any fevers which is huge. Over 50% of patients treated with ARC have treatment related fevers (which then requires hospital admission) & 50% require

either blood or platelet transfusions. Her hemoglobin on Monday Nov 23rd was looking fantastic but we go back on Fri Nov 27th because they're concerned with her platelets. I am praying that she doesn't need any blood products. We will start the next phase on Dec 7th so we actually have a week break pending no surprises! This phase has two surgeries & a lot of chemo but much, much less than the current one. I want to Thank you all again for the meals provided. I have canceled the past few meals & officially stopped the "meal train". You all have helped out our family more than I can put into words. Thank you so so much. Please continue to keep McKinley in your thoughts & prayers. Xo

- The Moore Family



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