



PRESS RELEASE

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HOLISTIC MOMS NETWORK CELEBRATES MOTHERS, AND MOTHER EARTH, IN UNCONVENTIONAL WAYS

Caldwell, NJ – Hosting a “Birth Circle”? Planting a vegetable garden? Painting a mural to call attention to the global warming crisis? Planting your child’s placenta under a tree? These are definitely *not* conventional Mother’s Day celebrations, but they *are* some of the ways that members of the Holistic Moms Network (HMN) will celebrate Mother’s Day this year.

HMN was founded in 2003 by a handful of moms who were yearning for the support and friendship of others parenting “outside of the mainstream.” Thanks to mounting interest in the environment and alternative medicine, today the organization is a national non-profit with 130 chapters across the U.S. promoting holistic health and green living.

“At the Holistic Moms Network, we honor motherhood every day,” says Dr. Nancy Massotto, HMN’s Executive Director. “Like Anna Jarvis, we don’t feed into the consumer culture which we feel sometimes co-opts major holidays and celebrations,” she says.

Anna Jarvis (1864-1948) - who dedicated her life to creating a national Mother’s Day - was greatly disturbed by the growing commercialization of her beloved holiday, epitomized by the marketing of cards and flowers. But the trend continued long after her death. According to Hallmark, 96% of American consumers take part in shopping on Mother’s Day. This year, Americans will spend 15.8 billion dollars on Mother’s Day gifts, including almost \$700 million on greeting cards, \$2 billion on flowers, and billions more on jewelry, clothing, restaurant meals and consumer goods.

“Mother’s Day holds a special symbolic meaning for many of our members because they strive to be active participants in their pregnancies, childbirth, and parenting,” says Massotto, who birthed both of her sons at home. “Our members try to make conscious choices in every aspect of their lives. Many members practice attachment parenting, extended breastfeeding, positive discipline, eat healthy foods, and live as eco-consciously as possible. They understand the incredibly important role that a mother plays in shaping how a child grows – physically, spiritually, and emotionally, who a child becomes in this world, and how that influences the kind of world we all share,” says Massotto.

“Growing” and “nurturing” are popular themes in HMN members’ Mother’s Day celebrations. Christina Kinzel of Fremont, California will plant her daughter Juliana’s placenta under a tree in her garden. The thought behind this European pagan custom is that the “tree” your baby grew from will go on to nourish another tree, which will grow strong with the seasons, provide shade and a home to animals, and be a permanent reminder of a child’s life on this Earth. “It will be known as Juliana’s tree and we will watch it grow right along with her,” says Kinzel.

Amara Wagner, HMN’s Bergen County Chapter Leader, will replant a vegetable garden this year. “Since Mother’s Day usually corresponds closely to the last frost date in my area (Northern, New Jersey), we always choose that day to plant our garden. We plant tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, peppers, and by mid-June we don’t have to buy any vegetables for the remainder of the summer. It’s a nice way to connect with Mother Earth,” says Wagner.

HMN’s Northern Virginia Chapter got a local nursery to give \$10 gift cards to their members so they could grow organic plants at home. “We thought it was a wonderful way to honor how each member is like a gardener as they nurture and help their children grow,” said Alexa Hutchins, the Chapter’s Co-Leader.

The Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania Chapter will have a clean-up day at a local park and then paint a mural to call attention to the global warming crisis. Jen Harayda will send pictures of her Chapter’s mural to 1sky - a non-profit focused on getting bold federal action on global warming by 2010. 1sky will showcase mothers’ murals from across the country at a major press event in Washington, D.C. The Holistic Moms Network is a 1sky ally.

In a similar activist vein, the Rolla, Missouri Chapter will have a family picnic in the park and then participate in a “Standing Women” action, whereby members will stand together in silence at 1pm for five minutes to think about what they can do, individually and collectively, to attain a just and peaceful world (see www.standingwomen.org for more information about this action).

Some HMN Chapters will host pampering nights, bringing in massage therapists and aromatherapists to care for their members. Others will host “Birth Circles” to share birth stories and “coming home” stories for families with adopted children.

And some moms will simply share time with family. “My kids and hubby plan on making me breakfast in bed and maybe help me in the garden,” says Janine Kietrys in Union County, New Jersey. As Marcel Proust said, “Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.”

For more information about the Holistic Moms Network, please visit www.holisticmoms.org or call (877) HOL-MOMS.