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Fall/Winter 2008

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Making Time for **MOMS**

By Rebecca Klein



As a far cry from a goldfish and juice box playdate at the park, Dallas sisters, Barbara Aronidin and Tina Wysk, wanted to bring something more substantive to **DFW** area moms and their families.

Thanks to these mompreneurs, local moms can attend cultural, educational and social "MetroMoms" events such as private museum tours where baby and toddler sounds are expected, discussions led by parenting experts, mom's nights and family events. During the

lunchtime speaker series, little ones snooze in their strollers or play as moms learn about everything from nutrition to selecting schools to building philanthropy into their lives.

It's all part of the company that the sisters launched in 2005 called Metroplex Baby &

Kids. At the sellout "Best & Hottest Products from Pregnancy to Preschool" luncheons, the \$35 entrance fee entitles each mom to draw a number and take turns choosing a trendy item to take home, ranging in value from \$10 to \$1400. Moms receive goody bags of product samples at all events and often get a shot at coveted raffle items such as the \$1100 Stokke stroller that mother of three, March Baremore, scored. She describes the product perks at the events as just the icing.

"I've learned so much. I have met some great people," she shares. Baremore appreciates how the conversations go beyond small talk and that the events are not just child focused. "Especially that first year of being a mom... you kind of don't treat yourself," says this stay-at-home mom. "MetroMoms is like that treat for me."

Lured by the social element and the speakers, Melissa Shanhouse, a new mom and member of a Smith Barney management team, takes extended lunches or vacation days in order to participate in some of the daytime events. "There's that much there that's special that I think it's worth attending and bringing my baby," she reports.

Wysk and Arondin recognize that some groups cater to either stay-at-home or working moms. They take pride in fostering an atmosphere that appeals to all.

Creating a company like Metroplex Baby

& Kids was nowhere on their own professional radar screens until they became new mothers and felt desperate for resources.

Before the birth of her two young children, Arondin co-owned a restaurant. "We weren't the first place you would go with children," she admits, adding they didn't even offer highchairs. Wysk, also a mother of two, was a commercial litigation attorney.

The sisters' partnership began with an online directory and calendar and has ex-

perienced multiple growth spurts. In addition to MetroMoms, their website, metroplexbaby.com, offers a wealth of resources. The company also sells a special savings card; the \$25 card entitles holders to yearlong discounts at nearly 200 local and national businesses and \$5 off all MetroMoms events. The pay-as-you-go events, which often

include a meal, on average run \$30.

Event participants aren't the only ones who find the experiences to be fulfilling. "It's given me a much more laid back perspective on parenting," explains Arondin. "I was one of those first time parents who felt like I had to do everything perfect."

"I think this is letting me enjoy motherhood a lot more because I appreciate different things about my kids and different things about being a mom that I may not have realized if I wasn't spending time with such a diverse group of moms," adds Wysk. ❖

"A "MetroMom" is a woman who loves life, believes that it only gets better with kids and that you do not lose your sense of self or style by becoming a mom. We believe that there is a MetroMom in every mom."

Barbara Arondin & Tina Wysk, Founders of Metroplex Baby & Kids