

EVERY MOM HAS A STORY

MOMMY

IN LOS ANGELES®
MAGAZINE

NATASHA ESTRADA

ON SHOWBIZ,
BURLESQUE AND
RAISING AN L.A. BOY

I GOT IT FROM MY MAMA

OUR FAVORITE
L.A. MOM-OWNED
BEAUTY & SKINCARE BRANDS
(and an interview with one of
the beauty *mompreneurs*)

PLUS,

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MOTHERS MAKING IT HAPPEN IN LOS ANGELES



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*"I feel lucky
to be able to raise my children in the
city of Angels.
It's as though we can travel the world, in
this big city: Olvera St., Chinatown, Little
Ethiopia... Kids learn by being exposed to
different environments and different peo-
ple. And we get to that here."*

*-Rachel Carrillo
Photographer*

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



I will never forget the night I sat in my bedroom nursing my newborn son Tobias while holding my three-year-old son Benjamin in my other arm. It was late. Toby was crying, having a hard time latching on and Benny was crying too, refusing to go to sleep (presumably due to a bad case of sibling rivalry).

I was tired and overwhelmed and I remember thinking to myself— *Is this what my life has come to?*

While motherhood filled my heart with love for two amazing little humans, it had also made me lose a sense of self-identity.

Before becoming a mom, when I had plenty of free time and social media wasn't consuming our days as much, I wanted to publish a magazine with a unique Los Angeles angle. My concept was there. I had the drive. But perhaps not enough inspiration.

Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine is my dream project.

On the night my two boys cried in my arms until they fell asleep, I started thinking of all the things I loved to do before they arrived. Those things included writing, sharing people's stories, surrounding myself with color, diversity and dynamic personalities in my native Los Angeles. That's when I made the decision to revisit my magazine idea. This time, however, my sons would join me in the journey while giving me inspiration to keep going.

Nothing made more sense than to validate fellow women in Los Angeles who are raising children and still finding ways to manifest self-love.

Through all the interviews I've done in the past 12 months, I can say that it's a wonderful truth that every mom has a story and Los Angeles is the best city to share it.

Thanks for joining us,

Anabel Marquez
CEO/Publisher/Editor
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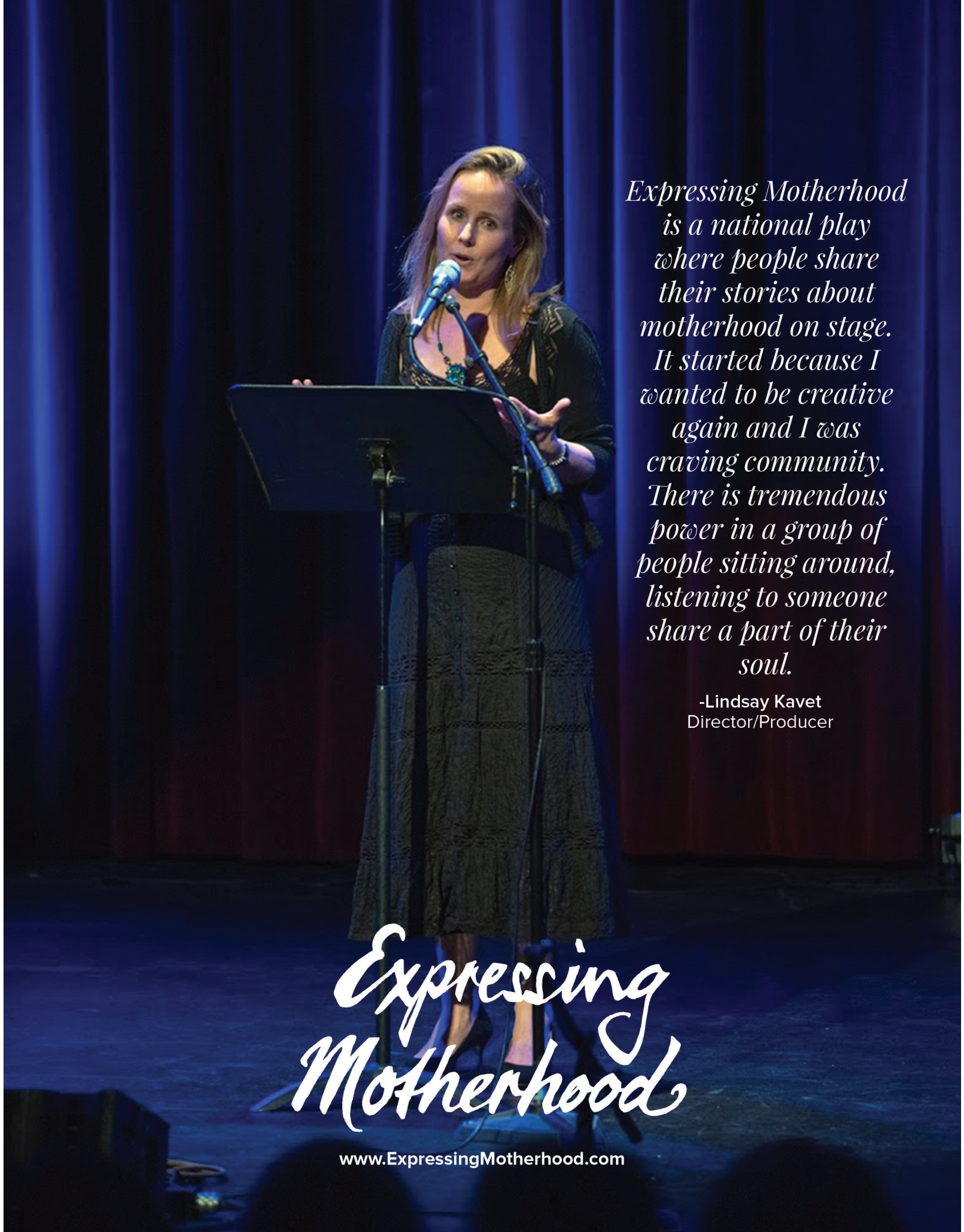
MY LATE GRANDMOTHERS EULALIA MARQUEZ AND ANGELINA ZAVALA FOR THEIR COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK MY MOTHER, GUADALUPE MARQUEZ AND FATHER, JUAN FRANCISCO MARQUEZ, FOR BELIEVING IN ME AND SUPPORTING MY JOURNEY— FROM MY EARLY DAYS AS A NEWS REPORTER HELPING ME RELOCATE TO DIFFERENT CITIES, TO BABYSITTING MY SONS SO I COULD FOCUS ON BRINGING THIS PUBLICATION TO LIFE. MY SISTERS, IRENE AND FRANCES— YOU ARE PURE, SOLID GOLD. TO MY HUSBAND PAUL, THANK YOU, MY LOVE. WITHOUT YOUR PATIENCE, HUMOR AND SUPPORT, THIS WOULD HAVE NEVER HAPPENED. FINALLY, TO MY SONS, BENJAMIN AND TOBIAS FOR BEING THE BRIGHTEST, MOST BELOVED SHINING STARS AND GIVING MAMA SO MUCH INSPIRATION.

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*Expressing Motherhood
is a national play
where people share
their stories about
motherhood on stage.
It started because I
wanted to be creative
again and I was
craving community.
There is tremendous
power in a group of
people sitting around,
listening to someone
share a part of their
soul.*

-Lindsay Kavet
Director/Producer

Expressing Motherhood

www.ExpressingMotherhood.com

PATTY RODRIGUEZ ON-AIR & ON FIRE

HOW A GIRL FROM LYNWOOD BECAME A POPULAR RADIO PERSONALITY, BOOK PUBLISHER AND LATINX INFLUENCER. SHE'S SHOWING HER SONS AND THE WORLD THAT LIFE IS BEST APPROACHED *SIN MIEDO*.

PHOTOS
BY
RACHEL
CARRILLO



It's cold and windy in Downtown LA on a Friday afternoon but that's not stopping Patty Rodriguez from visiting an outdoor taco shop tucked between old industrial buildings and modern coffee shops.

Rodriguez takes a look at the menu and reminds the group: "*Hoy no se come carne* (Spanish for *we don't eat meat today*)," in reference to the Catholic tradition of giving up meat on Fridays during Lenten season.

Her fish taco order arrives and Rodriguez carefully unwraps the aluminum foil and adds lemon and salsa to make her food taste *even better*.

It seems like a common practice but in retrospect, Rodriguez has been doing that type of thing all her life— she identifies something her culture appreciates, opens it up for thought then adds her name to make it even better.

That premise can be applied to her job as an on-air personality on KIIS FM, where she can be heard *On-Air with Ryan Seacrest* offering a unique perspective on trending topics. She first stepped foot at the station as a senior year high school student having ditched class with her friends in hopes of winning tickets for an NSYNC concert. Rodriguez not only won the concert tickets that day, she never left the station.

"I was like, 'this is my calling'. I started asking questions and right after high school I was an intern," she remembers.

Her calls to MAC Cosmetics requesting that the company develop a makeup line in honor of Tejano Music Star Selena Quintanilla proved fruitless during the first few attempts. Then someone at the company finally listened to Rodriguez. In 2016, she joined the Quintanilla Family in Corpus Christi to celebrate the Selena MAC collaboration, which sold out almost immediately.

"I really feel like everything I grew up dreaming about, is coming," she says.

And when she became a mom and started looking for children's books that illustrated the art, colors and language of her Mexican culture, she couldn't find any. She contacted literary agents, publishing houses and independent book presses, sent a few manuscripts and was told time after time that there wasn't a market that would buy her book idea. As a result, she and a childhood friend created their own publishing compa-



"I was obsessed with entertainment and radio. I listened to the radio every morning when my mom took us to school...I wondered what it was like to be inside the studio."

ny which now distributes their signature *Lil' Libros* to major department stores and book shops nationwide. "I want to tell my son, 'you can go after your dreams because I was able to go after my dreams and achieve them,'" says Rodriguez.



“If I’m going to be my son’s hero, this is going to be the way... by creating something that stays even after I’m gone.”

“I remember we were inside a white van and it was pouring rain and the van’s wheel got stuck in the mud. There were about twenty people in there and they started screaming that *La Migra* was coming (referring to immigration officials). My dad got out of the van to help push it out of the mud and I ran after him...”

In a moment where her mother was faced with either leaving her young, U.S. born kids in the hands of a stranger or taking them along for a potentially dangerous border-crossing journey, Rodriguez’ mom chose the latter.

“My parents came to this country because they wanted a better life,” says Rodriguez. “How am I not going to work toward that? It would be a disservice to their legacy if I did nothing! I realized this when I became a mom.”



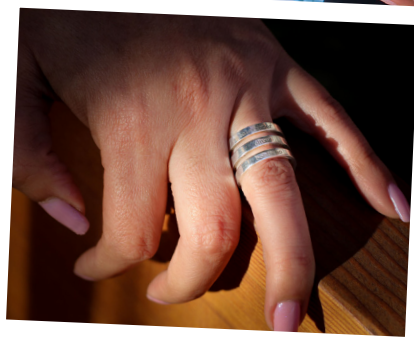
On Crossing the Border & Crossing Borders for Latinx People

Rodriguez’ parents immigrated to the United States in search of work opportunities and settled in Lynwood. Several years later, Rodriguez and her younger brother were born in Los Angeles. The goal was to save enough money, return to Mexico and live happily in their native country.

Keeping true to their objective, they moved back to Mexico when Rodriguez was a toddler. The problem, as many families have come to discover, was that moving back to Mexico where incomes and opportunities are scarce, makes reintegration difficult, especially when raising small children.

Rodriguez’ parents realized Los Angeles was a better home for their children but their U.S. legal status wasn’t yet permanent.

She remembers holding her mom’s hand at the Tijuana-San Diego border. Her dad and younger brother were there too. Although her mom doesn’t like offering details about this moment in the family’s history, Rodriguez is sharing what she remembers.





On Air

From #BossLady to #BossMom

Growing up in Lynwood, Rodriguez had dreams of being a part of the entertainment industry. “I was obsessed with entertainment and radio. I listened to the radio every morning when my mom took us to school...I wondered what it was like to be inside the studio,” she recalls. She didn’t want to be a singer, even though her mother’s mariachi background had greatly influenced her. She simply wanted to be a part of the industry and she had a knack for earning money. As early as elementary school, Rodriguez would sell candy bars to kids at school. Once she started working at KIIS FM, she also started writing for a magazine and managing a rock band. She had retail department store jobs and eventually, she launched a jewelry line, *Mala by Patty Rodriguez*, featuring jewelry pieces with popular and empowering words and phrases in Spanish. Her career at the radio station was booming and when Ryan Seacrest arrived in 2005, the two immediately hit it off. The only recurring feeling that unsettled Rodriguez was the thought that her radio gig was too good to be true. She identified it as Impostor Syndrome which is when a high-achieving individual is marked by feelings of being undeserving of their success. “I always thought about my accent...How did I con the world into thinking that I belong here?” she recalls thinking to herself. “It took me a very long time to believe that I actually belonged there...but in hindsight, I had to remind myself: ‘This wasn’t easy. You worked hard!’”

On Fire

From Loss to Success

When Patty had her first son Alexander, she started asking herself *who do I want to be as a mother?* Her pregnancy had been rough but after being diagnosed with post-partum depression due to undiagnosed Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), she felt a new sense of clarity. “When I was diagnosed, I saw the light,” says Rodriguez. “Alexander opened my eyes to that little girl I used to be. When we celebrate his birthday, I feel like we’re also celebrating mine because he reignited the little girl that would *dream* growing up. He brought that back.” With a newfound purpose, a thriving radio career and jewelry business, Rodriguez was happy. But she kept struggling with the notion that there weren’t any bilingual books for babies and publishers had rejected her manuscript. **Then her house caught fire and burned down. Everything Rodriguez owned was reduced to ashes.** “The only thing that was left were the clothes on our backs. I got really, really depressed,” says Rodriguez “The only way I can describe it is like mourning a loss.” When she stepped into the burnt house to clean through the charred remains, Rodriguez came across remnants of a small hand-made book she had created out of cardboard paper and stickers. It had embellishments and pictures depicting a baby book about *Loteria* (Mexico’s colorful and illustrative version of Bingo). Finding parts of her handmade book prototype amidst the ashes was a defining moment for Rodriguez. “This was God giving me a sign,” she says with tears rolling down her eyes. “I went back to the apartment where we were staying and started researching how to self-publish books.” She thought to herself: “If I’m going to be my son’s hero, this is going to be the way... by creating something that stays even after I’m gone.”

To date, Lil Libros has a collection of nearly a dozen board books that introduce babies to numbers, shapes and colors with Latin American themes such as Lucha Libre, The Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, Celia Cruz and a tribute to Selena Quintanilla, among others. There are also Lil Libros prints, pins, a board game and puzzles coming soon.

Rodriguez has a second son now, Oliver, who currently serves as her Lil Libros product sampler. When she’s not busy working, she’s serves as a motivational speaker and activist and she’s considered a Latina influencer, often receiving invitations to speak or make appearances at events and engagements.

Through it all, she remains loyal to her Mexican heritage, her first language and her cultural traditions.



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El Abad Land of Mom

Photos By Daniela Ray

If you visit *Landofmom.com*, you'll find beautiful images and stories about moms who have gone the extra mile to create a life of fulfillment that expands beyond motherhood as a part of a series called #MomBoss-Monday. It's a pleasantly curated website with matching social media channels and options to shop trendy fashion pieces that complement millennial women. It's also the platform that opened a world of possibilities for El Abad.

"The concept of Land of Mom is that *this* land is made for moms like you and me. That means every mom has her own lane. There is enough air for everyone to breathe in," says Abad who is married and has two sons Ryan, 3 and Leo, 1.

Abad, a former marketing manager with an MBA had been busy climbing the ranks in what she felt was her dream job.



She worked in the entertainment industry creating content for a film studio. Things looked good for Abad's future and she had no plans of slowing down. Then in 2015, she delivered her son Ryan.

"My plan all along was to go back to work after maternity leave," says Abad. "I naively thought that having a baby would just fall into the life that I had."

But as she held and breastfed her newborn son, Abad's mindset started shifting.

"I was in a place where...it wasn't so positive, mainly because of not being able to achieve personal and professional growth alongside motherhood," says Abad.

She was faced with deciding between going back to an environment that was often negative and not entirely supportive, even before having a baby, or walking away from it to pursue a new path that would allow her to more freely experience motherhood. She suddenly couldn't imagine herself returning to her career.

"I love this human more than I've loved anything in my life," Abad recalls thinking to herself. "You can imagine the struggle I felt in making this decision. Torn between the ideal that I had spent decades working toward... and the love I was holding in my arms."

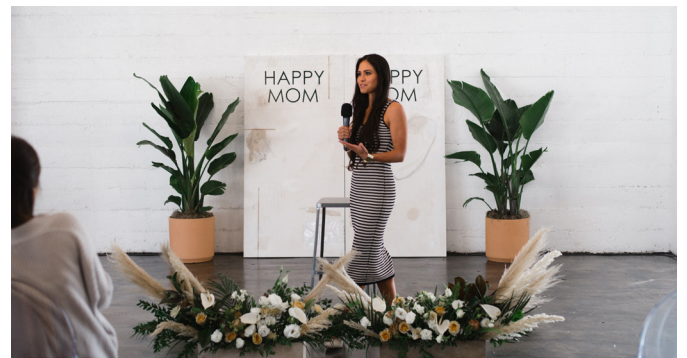
But Abad made her decision. First, she quit her job. Then, she created an Instagram account, followed by a blog, where she documented her feelings.



Before she knew it, followers started pouring giving way for her to build a tribe... the *Happy Mom Tribe*.

"I launched a website but in my mind I always said, 'I have to create a community... I have to create a support system of women that can rely on each other, that can support each other to grow to new heights.

I have to create what I sought out and didn't find when I first became a mom.»



The Happy Mom Conference

Photos by Daniela Ray

The Happy Mom Conference took place Sunday, May 6, 2018 and included workshops, a pop up shop, wellness talks and motivational sessions for millennial moms. Abad came up with the idea based on her personal experience and the response she got from the community she created online and hashtagged, the #HappyMomTribe.





MAKING MOMMY MOVES

Meet six Los Angeles moms who are making a better life for themselves and for others. These boss moms have vision, talent and good vibes. Visit www.MommyInLosAngeles.com to read more about them and other L.A. Moms we've featured since the launch of Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine online. Every Mom Has A Story.

STEFFI GUTIERREZ

BUSINESS

Breadologie

WEBSITE

www.breadologie.com

IN SHORT

Steffi gave up her career in the hotel industry to open a bakery with her husband Charles. In 2016, the couple and their two children introduced French-inspired Veinnoiseries and Artisan breads at their pastry shop, Breadologie, in Granada Hills. Since then, Breadologie has taken shape as a go-to Valley bread stop with such options as “cookies n’ cream croissants” and exotic-flavored traditional Filipino ensaimadas.

STEFFI SAYS

“Something I’ve learned since Charles and I have been together, we’ve had a lot of ups and downs with his work, the recession, our jobs... but when I see my kids here and my daughter is here helping to sweep the floor, you learn it’s all about family. It’s a family thing.”

MARY AGGARWAL

BUSINESS

Circle 4 Parents

WEBSITE

www.circle4parents.com

IN SHORT

Mary, who’s a mom of four, has managed a successful career in finance for many years. But missing from her experience juggling motherhood and a job in Corporate America was an accessible parent support resource. In 2017, she launched Circle 4 Parents, a virtual village that connects parents with one another and offers expert parenting coaches—all from the comfort of your home. The services are available online.

MARY SAYS

“Parenting is the hardest job, and we haven’t created an evolutionary approach to coaching in this area. As a mom, I just wanted basic tools to help me get out of the mindset of post-partum depression, move forward and know that I wasn’t alone”

JULIE PODOLEC

BUSINESS

Modern Pop

WEBSITE

www.themodernpop.com

IN SHORT

Julie is the millennial entrepreneur and mom behind Modern Pop, a Southern California inspired frozen fruit bar committed to “Putting Fruit First”. She started the company in 2014 after failing to find a frozen fruit bar she felt comfortable giving her teething infant. Currently, Modern Pop is available at 3,000+ stores, and online, proving anything is possible when passionate, high-energy entrepreneurs meet a void in a market.

JULIE SAYS

“After discovering most products skimped on fruit, had too much sugar, added juices and vegetable stabilizers, I decided to take matters into my own hands; (Modern Pop) has five ingredients or less, no refined sugar, non-gmo and vegan.”

RANA HANOUN

BUSINESS

AZ Liquor Store

WEBSITE

www.a-z-liquor.business.site

IN SHORT

After becoming a single mom, Rana was left looking for ways to provide for her son. Using her decade-long experience from working at her father’s successful liquor store business, Rana opened a store of her own. AZ liquor store in North Hills is where you can often find her stocking new beverages, working the cash register and having friendly conversations with patrons. She knows a lot about adult beverages and if you ask, Rana is happy to share the knowledge.

RANA SAYS

“I love talking to people and being in a place with constant visitors. The toughest thing when you get separated or divorced is that you get scared. I’ve always been very independent and when this opportunity came along, I said ‘if I don’t go for it, I’m just never gonna know’.



LETICIA ANAYA

She Believed She Could, So She Did

After going through the emotional rollercoaster of becoming a single mom when her son was two-years-old, Leticia decided to continue her undergraduate studies at Cal State Dominguez Hills. The demands of motherhood and college were a stressful combination that often resulted in tears and panic attacks for this Lynwood mom. But Leticia persevered, graduated, got a job as a para-educator and plans to pursue a post-graduate education. Meanwhile, her son Emilio Zamir is happy, healthy and thriving in science! “Motherhood can be difficult regardless, let alone when you’re doing most of the parenting alone, but it’s also very rewarding when you know you’ve accomplished all you’ve set your mind to as a single parent,” she says. Instagram: @songbirdyla



JASMIN CERVANTES

She Designed a Life She Loves

If you come across one of Jasmin’s Instagram posts, you may find yourself with a sudden inclination to get up and dance right in the middle of your work day. The high-energy San Fernando Valley mom is on a mission to live the happiest, healthiest version of herself. She does so with healthy eating, motivational messages and “happy jigs” to ward off negative energy and remind other moms that “it’s ok to choose yourself first.” Most recently, she started a podcast called “Between 2 Ovaries” where she and a co-host “talk about pretty much anything that tickles our ovaries,” says Jasmin. Plus, she’s promoting C3, an online community built in an effort to reclaim power, womb love, and spiritual & sexual self-exploration. Instagram: @littlenugget_bignugget

The L.A. Mom Who's Honoring Her Mother's Legacy in Watts

Paula Aliewine is carrying out her mother's legacy. As president of the Edna J. Aliewine Foundation, she leads the organization of the annual Watts Christmas Parade.

Initially created to inspire a sense of civic pride for the residents of Watts, the annual Christmas parade has been a holiday staple since 1964. Aliewine's mother would use the slogan "Don't move, improve!" to empower local residents, most of whom were African-American, to take pride in their community.

"Ever since I was a kid, I had to be involved. At 10 years old, I had to help," recalls Aliewine. "I saw the parade go through rises, falls, good performances and real big stuff."

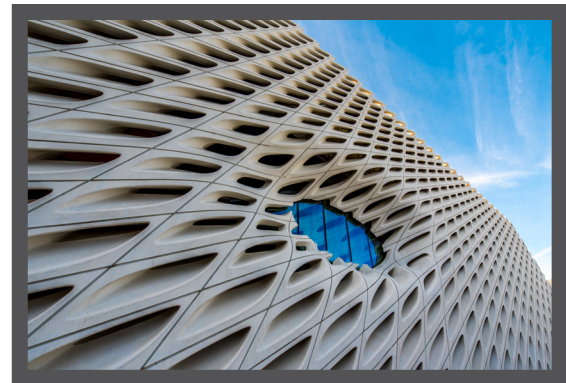
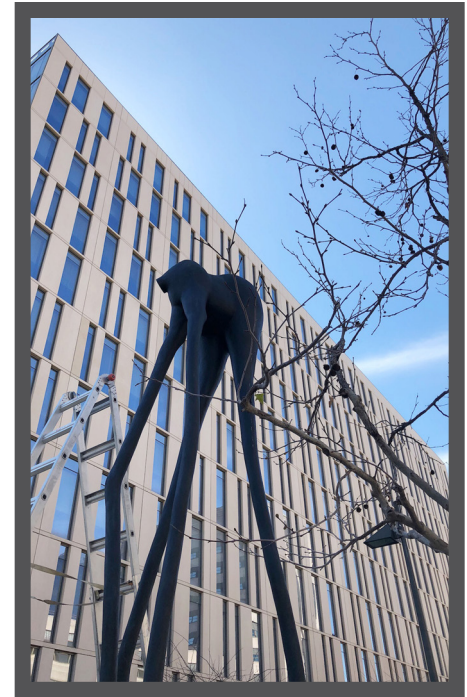
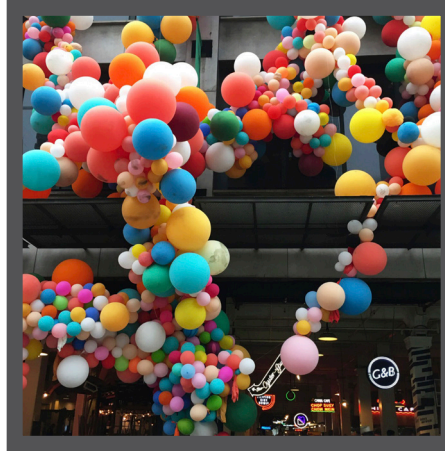
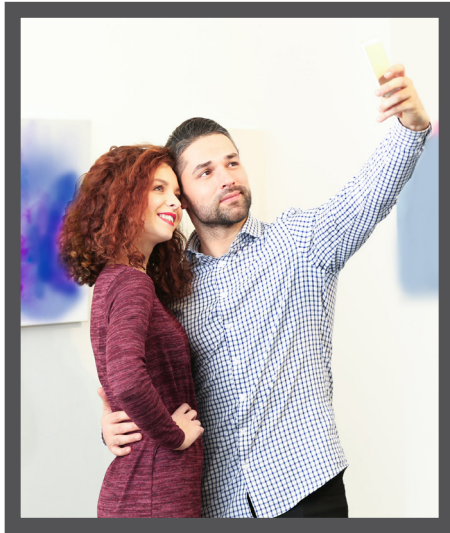
During the 2017 Watts Christmas Parade, Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine spent time with Aliewine who was honored for continuing her mother's tradition.

"This is the first time I've ever received awards. I wanted to cry. Somebody's thinking about me," said Aliewine.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters recognized her for being determined in keeping the Watts Christmas Parade alive. "She's sending a message that Watts residents are alive and well. We're working and we are going to enjoy Christmas," said Congresswoman Waters.



WHAT DOES 'CULTURE' MEAN FOR ANGELENOS?



A Study Commissioned by LaPlaca Cohen

According to a study labeled “Culture Track ‘17” by strategy, design, and marketing firm, *LaPlaca Cohen*, audiences from 18 and up attending an event see “having fun” as their first priority. Maggie Hartnick, the Managing Director of LaPlaca Coehn, says there’s been a paradigm shift in how the public views culture and the arts. “Audiences nationwide are breaking down cultural norms and redefining them. Now culture can mean Caravaggio, Coachella, Tannhäuser, or taco trucks,” says Harnick.. The study showed: More than a third of art museumgoers did *not* think art museums were a cultural experience; over half of theatergoers felt the same; Audiences were more likely to consider a street fair or food and drink experience culture than an opera or ballet; The lesson, Hartnick says, is that the definition of culture has democratized, possibly to the point of extinction. Activities that have traditionally been considered “culture” and those that haven’t are now on a level playing field.

In Los Angeles, The Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County (NHMLA) brought a traveling exhibition, *Tattoo* to Southern California. A working tattoo parlor within the exhibition featured live demonstrations and special times for tattoo appointments by L.A. artists. The Music Center in Los Angeles presented *Sleepless: The Music Center After Hours*, which offered a 21st-century re-imagining and re-interpretation of what it means to be a contemporary Cuban artist working in a globally-influenced world using music, sound and light installations, short film screenings, artwork and more in a late night experiential environment; The Los Angeles Philharmonic, one of the top 10 orchestras in the world, went on tour for two weeks, and invited the board and major patrons to go with it; their musicians meet concert-goers in the lobby after performances to chat; The culture study was fielded nationwide with more than 4,000 respondents, all of whom had participated in at least one cultural activity in the past year.



Photo By Carlos Ponce



Photo By Anabel Marquez



Photo By Mucio Martinez

L.A. MOMS WHO BRING LIFE TO THE DAY OF THE DEAD

Mexico's celebration of the dead dates back to pre-Colombian cultures as a month-long festivity that started on the ninth month of the Aztec calendar (around early September) with large feasts, celebratory dances and massive gatherings. The Catholic church eventually downscaled the celebration into a day-long religious holiday observed on November 2. Nevertheless, people in Mexico continue celebrating the Aztec tradition and the festivity has made its way to Southern California.

Traditionally, families build private altars or shrines in their homes with *ofrendas* (offerings) that have candles, decorations, favorite meals, and photo memorabilia of the deceased. Many dress up and highlight the bright and vivid colors of the culture into their observances.

"It's a very unique way of honoring our ancestors and showing our children that when it comes to death, there's nothing to be afraid of. Life and the afterlife are both celebrations," said Gabriela Espinosa Aguilar, a high school history teacher at Escuela Secundaria Técnica no. 84 "Belisario Domínguez Palencia" in Mexico City.

In Los Angeles, the city has embraced this tradition and welcomed *Día de Los Muertos* with jovial and picture-worthy events and art exhibits, like the annual Día de Los Muertos Festival at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery.

We found three Los Angeles moms who proudly celebrated this unique tradition and gracefully highlighted this distinctive aspect of Mexican culture. Meet Lily Martinez, Cindy Shea and Jessica Resendiz.

Cindy Shea

Musician

Mariachi Divas de Cindy Shea



If you visit the Disney California Adventure theme park, you may feel the need to start dancing as soon as Cindy Shea picks up her trumpet and starts playing to the tune of *El Son de la Negra*, a popular mariachi song.

Her band, Grammy Award-winning *Mariachi Divas de Cindy Shea*, is a nationally recognized, female-only mariachi group based in Los Angeles, with an ongoing contract at the Disneyland Resort.

The Irish-Italian mom of a young boy has broken barriers in a male-dominated industry and has received praise for her trumpet-playing skills and leadership in directing successful mariachi bands. By commemorating the *Día de los Muertos* celebration with cultural pride, she highlights the importance of this tradition to an international audience that visits the Disneyland Resort during *Día de los Muertos* season.

"A couple years ago, one of my girls started painting our faces," Shea told *Mommy In Los Angeles* Magazine referring to one of her fellow musicians. "We thought it was a great idea!"

When Shea was a student at Cal State Fullerton, she caught the attention of Latin Jazz legend Arturo Sandoval who took her in as his student. She received a full-ride scholarship to Florida International University, where she studied jazz performance.

Most recently, Shea released her latest album *Recordando a Juan Gabriel*, which is a tribute to the Mexican singer and songwriter that passed away in 2016.

Lily Martinez

Designer & Influencer
The Beautiful Circus

If you're among Lily Martinez' nearly 70,000 followers on Instagram, then you know she has a remarkable eye for creativity.

The Los Angeles born-and-raised mom of four is an all-around crafting extraordinaire who draws, designs, paints, sews, cooks, bakes, creates, builds and decorates. She makes her projects look easy and aesthetically pleasing, and her followers are always eager to see her next creation.

Martinez, who formerly worked as a Mattel Barbie fashion designer, dedicates special attention each year to her one-of-a-kind Halloween and Día de los Muertos costume and make-up designs. Her 2017 Día de los Muertos ensemble was no exception. She created a Catrina gown and elegantly wore it during the Hollywood Forever Cemetery Día de los Muertos celebration.

"I just love everything about Día de los Muertos— the costumes, the vibes, the flowers, the family & friends, the culture... and of course celebrating the life of the loved ones that are no longer with us in this world," Martinez said on her Instagram account.

Among the details found on her 2017 Catrina outfit, a stunning heart applique with sequins, glitter and ornate details, a delicate lace veil, skeleton hands painted over sheer gloves and a grand flower crown whose creation she attributed to one of sisters. Her makeup included pearls, jewels and other sparkly touches.

"My costume is in honor of the love we have for those loved ones we miss so much," she said.



Photo By Kevin Berru

Jessica Resendiz

Fashion Designer & Artist
RaggedyTiff

For an artist who makes most of her work by hand, it's outstanding to see how many women are wearing Jessica Resendiz' designs.

Resendiz is the mom behind popular Los Angeles brand, *RaggedyTiff*.

She launched her brand in 2010 and maintained loyal to one concept— that her work would emphasize the beauty of her Mexican Culture.

Customers across the globe have grown to love her designs and it's not uncommon to see her latest products sell out shortly after being listed online.

The high demand for *RaggedyTiff* products keeps Resendiz close to her sewing machine while juggling motherhood (she has a school-age daughter) and coming up with the next line of designs.

One of her popular collections, *Amor Eterno*, arrived in time for *Día de los Muertos* in 2017 offering an assortment of skull-themed designs, including head turbans, tassel earrings, skull-shaped clutches and clothing items.

During the Hollywood Forever Cemetery celebration, Resendiz wore a hand-made rose and peony crown with gold bauble glittery accents and lights.

"I stand with pride and no shame of my beautiful culture," she said. "To dedicate this time a year & all year round to *mi familia* that has left me, to all that are resting in peace. You're not forgotten and I carry you in *mi Corazón*, soul and mind."



Photo By Carlos Ponce

ON LOSING A SON & THE IDEA THAT TIME HEALS

BY MARY CARRILLO

Photo by Denise Hernandez

On a warm summer night in June 2008, my life forever changed when I delivered my son Calvin. I was a parent at the age of 21.

During Calvin's early years, I became a single mom which strengthened our bond. Calvin was an active boy who enjoyed outdoor play, bike riding and sports. One of his favorite hobbies was gardening. I killed every plant I attempted to grow, while his flowers always bloomed! Life with my little guy was exciting and busy. I had no clue Calvin would become my greatest teacher.

In late April 2013, weeks shy of his seventh birthday, a small bump on his head led us to a doctor's office where I heard the most-life altering words, "Your child has cancer". Calvin's treatment began and so did our new lives full of appointments, tests, medication and countless procedures, for eleven long months. After every chemo session and medical procedure, Calvin's resiliency grew. He needed a bone marrow transplant and after several brutal weeks in isolation, we found a donor. Calvin's transplant was a success. He was in remission and the future looked bright. His hair began to grow and his beautiful lashes seemed longer than ever.

In early March 2014, while playing catch, Calvin told me he felt chest discomfort. In an abundance of caution, I took him to the hospital. Calvin was giddy and happy. By that evening, however, he was in ICU. His body rapidly worsened. His lungs were severely damaged and after a few days, he was attached to a breathing machine.

The doctor sat me down again. This time, in silence, until the words finally spilled out: "We have done everything we can for your son. There is nothing else that can be done."

As the hours passed his departure was inevitable. On the evening of March 24, 2014, I held Calvin in my arms as he took his last breath.

There are no words for the loss of a child. But I remember promising him that I'd make a difference in his honor. The Calvin Preston Foundation collects and donates toys for pediatric oncology patients at local hospitals. We help families with groceries, bill pay assistance and basic needs. This work is beautifully fulfilling; I get to see firsthand the gratitude these families and children have for simple gestures. Calvin and I experienced this; I know how beneficial the help is.

In 2017 I married the most beautiful soul and gave birth to Calvin's sister, Cielo earlier this year. The gift of becoming a mother again and being Cielo's mom has added an incredible meaning to my life. I wish Calvin was here with us to meet his sister. However, I find comfort in knowing that Cielo will know Calvin and learn how much he's missed. I am full of gratitude to have spent seven incredible years with my son. Time does not heal all wounds. However, it's possible to live with a broken heart and still live to the fullest.
www.CalvinPrestonFoundation.org



POWER TO THE POLLS!

Los Angeles Moms who attended the 2018 Women's March Los Angeles with their kids pledged to take their message to the polls during the November midterm elections.

The Women's March Los Angeles took place on Saturday, January 20, 2018.

It was the event's second year and one that drew over 700,000 people to the streets of downtown Los Angeles. The powerful lineup of activists and stars included moms Viola Davis, Scarlett Johansson, Mila Kunis, Eva Longoria, Natalie Portman, Nicole Richie and Idina Menzel, among others.

This year's Women's March Los Angeles was part of a national movement to unify and empower those who stand for women's rights, human rights, civil liberties and social justice for all.

"I'm very inspired by all the people...who came to support equal rights," said Shawn Chen, a Los Angeles mother of three who attended the march with several friends. "As much as Trump has caused a lot of damage to our government and democracy, if this rise in interest in expressing ourselves and using the platform of the first amendment to get more people to vote and more

people, especially to run for office, that will really improve democracy."

Chen was carrying a poster with a picture of the White House that said: 'Why are you still here?'

The Women's March Los Angeles Foundation committed to turning out the vote and using the power of the march, along with the work done by partner organizations, to bring attention to the urgency of preparing for the November midterm elections. The March encouraged participants to use their vote in order to help build a government that reflects their ideals, and provid-

ed the tools to do so by having voter registration sign-ups available on-site. Speakers addressed important issues such as voter turnout, access, restrictions and intimidation, and discussed a plan of action leading up to November 2018 and beyond.

The event also featured music, art, civic leaders and speakers whose values align with the National Women's March Unity Principles of ending violence, protection of reproductive rights, LGBTQIA rights, workers' rights, civil rights, disability rights, immigrant rights, indigenous people's rights and environmental justice.





“No more pandering. No more feeling guilty about hurting someone’s feelings when something doesn’t feel right for me... I have made a promise to myself to be responsible to myself, that in order to trust my instincts I must first respect them.”

—Scarlett Johansson

“It is through human dedication and effort that we move forward...And then when we don’t work, what happens is that time actually becomes an ally to the primitive forces of social stagnation. And the guardians of the status quo are in their oxygen tanks, keeping the old order alive.”
—Viola Davis



The issues haven’t changed and the policies haven’t changed. There’s a lot more work for us, as women, to do. This effort stems from a long running history of our own women’s movement. The fight still continues.”
—Lila Espinosa

This is our future. I had awesome women before me, awesome women that we’re raising for the future and I think there’s a lot of great influence. I want her to have that at home and outside the home.”
—Angie Lizarraga Ramirez



CECILIE HAMMELEV-WETHJE: MOMPREENEURSHIP & OKO BOKS

“Here, it’s actually more appealing to become **an entrepreneur** even though it’s tougher, and you have **no benefits.**”

Moms in Denmark prefer a full-time job over launching their own business while moms in the U.S. dream of launching their own business to leave their full-time job. These contrasting preferences were part of the findings Cecilie Hammelev-Wethje made while working on her Master’s thesis.

The 25-year old mom and owner of Oko Boks, an online baby gift shop based out of Glendale, CA, was living in Denmark and working on her thesis on *Momprenneurship* while raising her daughter. She was also preparing for a permanent move to the United States that would happen upon completion of her post-graduate degree. “I was looking into what I wanted to do here,” recalls Cecilie. “I found it really tough for me coming from a completely different corporate culture and social culture, where moms are treated a little bit different.”

Cecilie had interviewed moms in both countries and learned women tend to gravitate toward a placement in society that will yield the most benefit to their children, she says.

In Denmark, that means keeping a corporate job, where salaries are generous and Maternity Leave is a 12-month paid benefit. Additionally, moms in Denmark receive other incentives after returning to work, like a quarterly income in addition to their regular pay, for expenses related to raising a child, says Cecilie.

In the United States, on the other hand, she learned a mom is usually pressured to return to work after only 3-months of guaranteed protections under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Childcare expenses usually take up a large portion of salaries. In many cases, the commute to work, the cost of living and the stress involved with balancing a *nine-to-five* and motherhood, motivates women to leave the workforce in hopes of spending more time with their kids and creating a business that will turn profitable.

“Here, it’s actually more appealing to become an entrepreneur even though it’s tougher, and you have no benefits,” she concluded. Her findings and her desire to promote the simple and minimalistic style of Scandinavia, influenced Cecilie to create Oko Boks upon moving to the U.S.

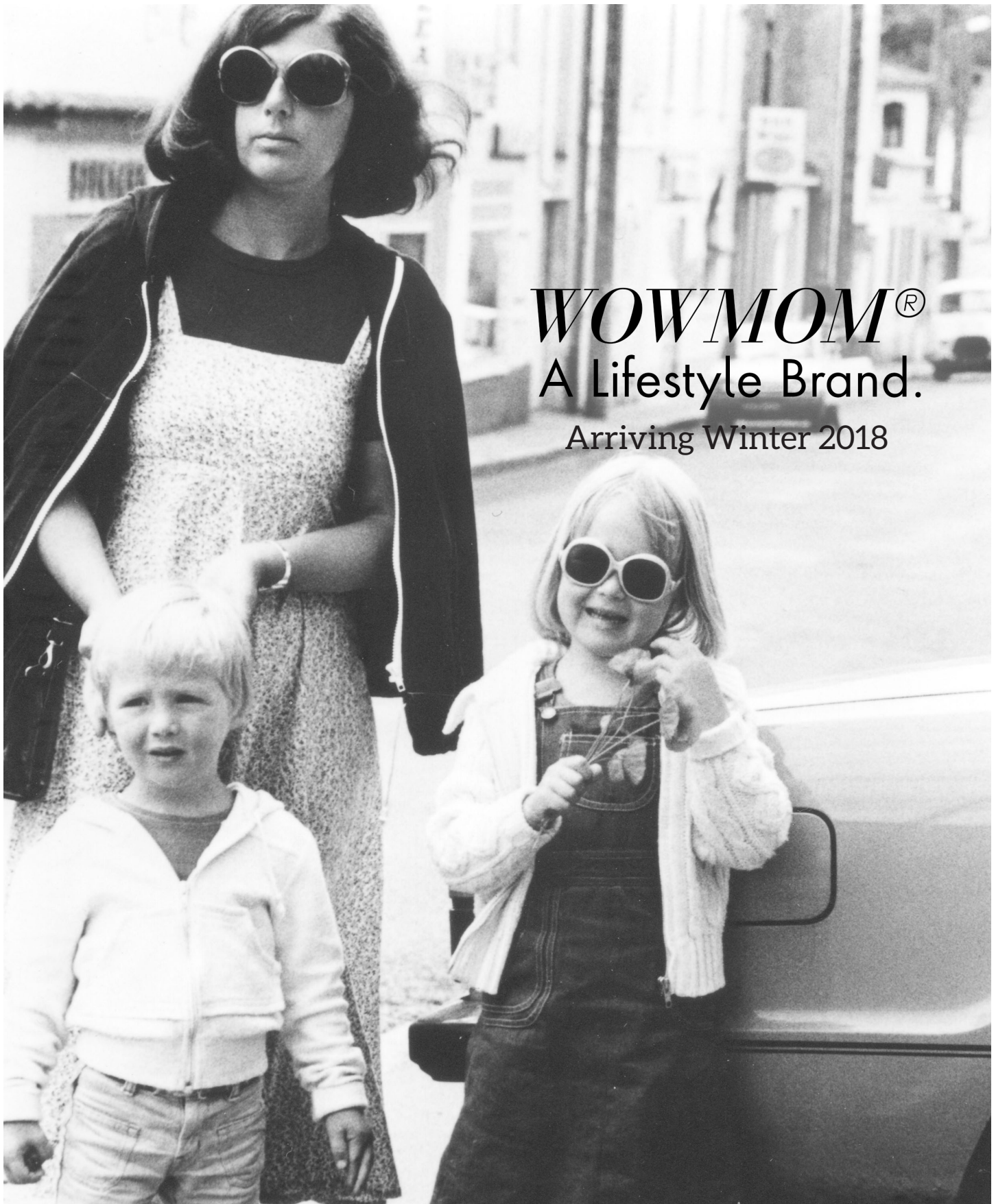
Oko Boks which means “Organic Box,” is an online store that offers carefully curated baby gifts and gift boxes. If you visit her shop, you will be greeted by a charming and gender-neutral assortment of goods for baby and even a few items for new moms. Each item has been carefully selected and is organic, natural and non-toxic.

“This is really my own sensibility. It’s stuff that I adore and love. It’s about finding nice textures and colors. I didn’t grow up with a lot... but I took that sensibility with style and my mom showed me it was better to have one good thing than thirty bad things.”

Her husband has supported her entrepreneurial initiative and even if business doesn’t turn out as planned, Cecilie isn’t concerned.

“Sometimes it’s more about the process than the result. Even if you fail, you still learned a lot and you’re going to use that lesson the rest of your life,” she says. Any lesson, is a lesson learned.”





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Pantone's 2018 Color of the Year: Ultra Violet

If there's an artist who's left us enough reason to believe we can fly in #LosAngelesCalifornia, it's the one and only Collette Miller who has painted plenty Angel wings throughout the city (and world) in beautiful hues of fuchsia, blue and purple, er, Ultra Violet.

Miller began her Global Angel Wings Project in 2012 to "remind humanity that we are the angels on this Earth." This particular set is located at the Lyft Hub in Downtown Los Angeles. 662 S Santa Fe Ave | Los Angeles



Enjoy a delicious "La Bidi Bidi Bom Bom" Donut from Donas, a popular donut establishment in Downey where the owners created this variety in honor of the late Tejano music queen, Selena Quintanilla. The donut is delicious and we had never enjoyed the consumption of purple glitter... until now. 8636 Imperial Hwy, Downey, CA

Downtown LA's Arts District is beaming with Ultra Violet vibes but none have caught our attention as much as this mural by Carly Ealey titled "Soul Traveler". It was painted live during the Container Yard's 2017 Fresh Coat Mural Fest and we've been driving by it ever since. Corner of Seaton St. & 5th St. | Los Angeles



Your Guide to Ultra Violet Los Angeles

Los Angeles has emerged as the ultimate Instagrammer's destination given its perfect weather, cultural diversity and colorful expression. We set out to highlight a few specific locations and treats where locals and visitors alike can enjoy a moment in celebration of the 2018 Pantone color of the year— Ultra Violet. After all, Pantone explains that Ultra Violet "communicates originality, ingenuity, and visionary thinking that points toward the future... Ultra Violet suggests the mysteries of the cosmos, the intrigue of what lies ahead, and the discoveries beyond where we are now." #ItsLosAngeles

This eye-catching dessert from Koreatown's Café Bora is nothing but a perfectly tasty purple yam float serve. It's always in season and in case you were wondering, it was delivered EXACTLY as it looked on the menu. Plus, its garnished with an Ultra Violet toned flower. The whole experience makes you leave the establishment feeling closer to the cosmos. 450 S. Western Ave. Ste. 3F | Los Angeles



We couldn't possibly live in the City of Angels without plenty of angel wing murals to remind us of our ethereal reality! These are unique in that they're white over an Ultra Violetish backdrop at Hollywood's Universal City Walk. Completed by international street artist, Kelsey Montague, the City Walk wings are part of Montague's What Lifts You campaign intended to provide people a platform to share what inspires them. 100 Universal City Plaza | Universal City



The EightyTwo Bar in Downtown Los Angeles is alive with arcade games, good food and stiff drinks, indoors. Outdoors, the Arts District's popular 80's inspired venue is the backdrop of an untitled mural with plenty of Ultra Violet hues. L.A. Artists Vyal and RISK collaborated on this artwork which incorporates Vyal's signature eyes. Eye can see it. Can you? 707 E. 4th Pl. | Los Angeles



Pretty In Purple



1. Bite Beauty Amuse Bouche Lipstick in Lavender Jam - Electric Blue-Violet. Created and crafted by hand, Bite's small batch, low-heat process preserves a balanced blend of lip-quenching nutrients, vitamins, and omega oils. **2. Butter London in Mauvelous.** A mauve crème nail polish in a fashion-size bottle. The varnish is quick-drying, high gloss, and chip resistant. **3. Marc Jacobs Lola Eau de Parfum.** This perfume is a free spirit with an irresistible attitude. *Lola* is an intoxicating swirl of rich layers, wrapping the skin in sensuous florals blooming with a signature note of fuchsia peony. **4. Nurse Jamie Uplift Massaging Beauty Roller.** A beauty tool for the face and body with a unique hexagon shape that contains 24 precious tourmaline stones to temporarily energize, enhance, revive and uplift your skin. **5. Marc Jacobs Beauty Enamored Hi-Shine Nail Lacquer in Ultraviolet.** A Nail Lacquer with an unprecedented finish and the shine of 30 coats of lacquer. It's formulated with patented bonding agents that deliver a plasticized wet look. **6. TATCHA Soothing Silk Body Butter.** A body moisturizer designed to hydrate and soothe even the most sensitive, irritated skin. The blue hue of this formula varies as a property of natural Japanese Indigo and disappears upon application. **7. O'O Hawaii Brilliant Beauty Feather Balm.** A highly rejuvenating miracle balm that can be worn overnight or during the day. It's deeply hydrating, anti-inflammatory and protects against free radicals while plumping and smoothing. **8. Tom Ford Private Shadow in Purple Reign.** This gorgeous & groundbreaking eye shadow delivers rich color and amplified shimmer. Encased in a luxurious clutch-sized mirrored compact, it's an expression of unadulterated color.

CAMILLE ARIANE MAKEUP

“What drives me is growing with people that are entrepreneurs”



Read Camille Ariane's Story on www.MommyInLosAngeles.com

August 8, 2018



Illustrations by Kolyada Yuriy

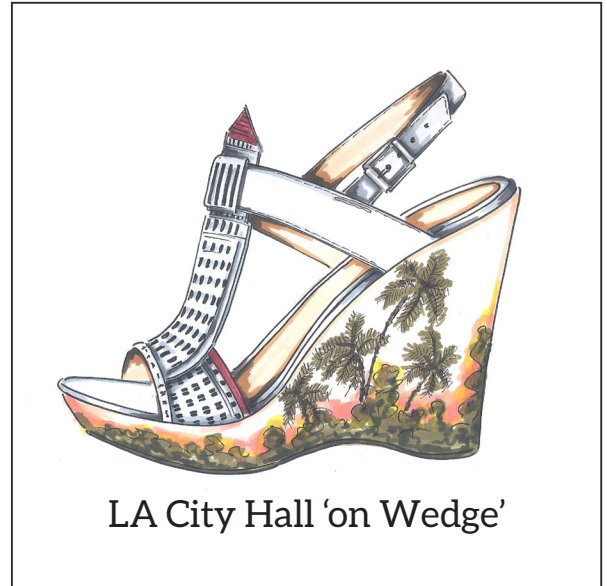
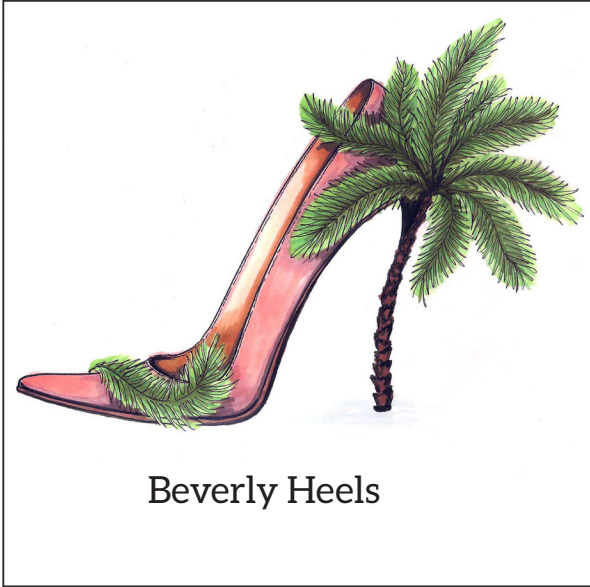
ALL THE FEELS FOR L.A. HEELS

Inspired by Marilyn Monroe's famous quote: "Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world," we searched for shoes that inspired productivity, glamour and creativity, with a strong Los Angeles influence. But we couldn't find any so we set out to create our own designs.

This collection of LA-themed footwear made us believe in Monroe's quote, albeit, on a more localized scale—

Give a Mom the right shoes and she can conquer Los Angeles.

Good Shoes.



Good Places.



The Hollywood (de)Sign



'Walks' of Fame



Walt Disney Concert Clog



Will Walk for Donuts

Nefeteri Plessy

THE SINGLE MOMS PLANET



What does a woman do when she finds herself recently divorced, with two children, confused about how to redirect her life and frustrated over the situa-

tion that got her there?

If you're Nefeteri Plessy, you ride the storm, head on.

You channel your post-divorce pain toward a planet-sized cause and make it a life goal to help other single moms.

Plessy is the founder of Los Angeles-based *Single Moms Planet*, a non-profit organization whose mission is to uplift under-resourced single mothers and their children.

With a background in television and modeling, Plessy marketed her organization and confirmed an issue she had previously researched—that there weren't many other groups dedicated solely to the support and empowerment of single mothers.

When Single Moms Planet received its tax-exempt status, the outpouring of donor support and interest in membership took the organization from a dream to a popular online destination for single moms all around the world.

"In the five years Single Moms Planet has been in existence, we have built a community of mothers who can...create a culture of empowerment, resiliency, self-preservation and strength," says Plessy. "Our thriving community of mothers is like a mosaic made up of different races, cultures, professions, socio-economic statuses and interests," she says,

On Friday, May 4, 2018 the Single Moms Planet organization hosted its 5th Annual Awards Luncheon and Festival at the Peninsula Beverly Hills.

Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine, served as a media partner during the festivity and had a conversation with Plessy days before the big day where she shared she was *'Letting go and letting God'*.

MILAMag: If there's one lesson you've learned through your organization about motherhood and women who are raising children on their own, what would you say that is?

Plessy: Our diversity has helped us to persevere, overcome challenges, and build a foundation that will help Single Moms Planet be a resource for mothers and their children for years to come.

MILAMag: What makes Los Angeles a unique place for single moms?

Plessy: The Los Angeles single mommy is sexy, resilient and thriving. She is a go-getter that knows what she wants and won't let anyone stand in her way.



Photo by VCB Photography

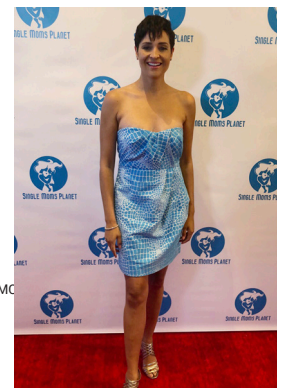
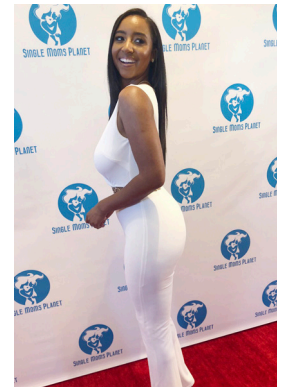
5TH ANNUAL SINGLE MOMS PLANET AWARDS RED CARPET



The Single Moms Planet, a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization celebrated a successful 5th Annual Awards Ceremony Luncheon and Festival honoring single moms at the Peninsula Beverly Hills.

The gala luncheon kicked off with a red carpet welcome, followed by an awards presentation honoring Alicia Dunams as the Affluent Woman of the Year; Pia Gladys Pery as the Fashion Icon of the Year; Nichole MacDonald as the Emerging Mom Brand of the Year; Rodger and Asia Saffold as Family of the Year; Shanna Moakler as Community Activist of the Year; Lee Harrison as Man of the Year; Anastasia Soare as Visionary of the Year; Tiffany Hinton as Business Woman of the Year; and Denise Albert & Melissa Gerstein as Media Moguls of the Year.

The women in attendance graced the red carpet with trendy ensembles and beautiful gowns:



L.A. Mamacitas



The Network
L.A. Mamacitas
Established in 2015 as an organization to connect local moms with one another, L.A. Mamacitas has evolved into a business that offers unique networking experiences for women as well as influencer opportunities with brand partnerships.

The Organizers on Instagram:
Ruby @L.A.MamacitasBlog
Janet @JansSpring
Yesica @Yesicav014
@L.A. Mamacitas

Mamacitas & Mimosas has become L.A. Mamacitas' signature networking event. With a mission to offer Los Angeles moms and Latinx female business owners a supportive community, the annual event is known for its fun, unique and welcoming environment where guests have an opportunity to network, enjoy mimosas, savor tasty foods and shop. Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine was a media sponsor at this year's Mamacitas & Mimosas

event, where we offered guests bottles of bubbly and complimentary caricature sketches.

The L.A. Mamacitas Community, led by local mom blogger Ruby Medina and her partners Janet Gomez and Yesica Vasquez-Gutierrez operates with one goal in mind: "To support women".

To learn more and attend future events, visit: www.LAMamacitas.me

EFFORTLESSLY ELEGANT

MARIE FRANCE VAN DAMME OFFERS PIECES
INSPIRED BY GLOBAL ARTISTIC INFLUENCE

By Irene Marquez



In 1979 when Marie France Van Damme was invited by her friend to an uncle's informal dinner at Chez Laurent Restaurant in New York City, Van Damme found herself dining with Salvador Dalí and sitting near Andy Warhol.

"These people were not only spectacular looking in their own ways but the conversations were fascinating, captivating," she recalls. "It was a glamorous and memorable evening."

Earlier this year, Van Damme, a Canadian-born fashion designer launched

MFVD Glamour in Beverly Hills, a 16-piece evening wear capsule collection that features outfits in a metallic color palette made with such fabrics as French lace, Italian weaves and Chinese silks.

Her collection can be considered a requiem of that fateful dinner she attended which presumably captured Van Damme's vision of timeless glamour. It's also

inspired by Studio 54 and the Hollywood jet set.

"Glamour is not about the dress and the jewels. It's not a style," assures Van Damme. "Glamour must seem effortless and have some mystery."

To that extent, Van Damme has combined her designs with accessories that look effortlessly elegant, including the likes of metallic Lamé turbans, French lace gloves and vaporous coverups.

My favorites include a black lace ensemble that graciously drapes over what looks to be a MFVD

black metallic swimsuit. I also feel the gold BouBou caftan (pictured) is a great design that was created to withstand the test of time with a mysterious appeal that's both fancy and flowy.

You can shop for Van Damme's universal fashion pieces at the Peninsula Beverly Hills.



URBANA
CHAPPA

Maison de Mini

To meet Urbana Chappa is to meet a radiant and empowered entrepreneur. The Los Angeles mom of four is a self-described “Renaissance Woman” who balances motherhood, a children’s clothing line, various philanthropic ventures, celebrity styling, and her marriage to a successful music composer, all while staying true to her distinctive style and love of colorful fashion.

“I’m not one to follow trends and I’m not one to follow seasons,” says Chappa proudly. She leads a busy life but she’s upbeat and encouraging. “There’s a lot of women that say: ‘I can’t do this’ after having kids. I have four kids...I’m here to tell you, *you can!*,” she says. Standing in her home studio, Chappa demonstrates her latest designs for her children’s clothing line,

Maison de Mini. Her most recent fashion undertaking was a result of inspiration she drew from her own kids by researching fabrics that would be gentle on their skin. She sketched the designs based on their love of play and comfort. Maison de Mini became a gentle, eco-friendly, bamboo clothing line. “This is beyond clothing,” says Chappa. “I want to change the world for kids.” Leftover scraps and un-

used fabrics from the Maison de Mini fashion line are used for headbands, socks, hats and underwear, which are donated to orphanages and homeless shelters. In addition, Chappa donates 10% of all Maison de Mini’s proceeds to charity. “I have always been into fashion and once I started having kids, dressing them up was everything,” she adds.



“This is beyond clothing,” says Chappa. “I want to change the world for kids.”



before *Maison de Mini*

In 2012, after having her second child, Chappa found herself battling through post-partum depression. “I just knew something wasn’t right,” she remembers. “I don’t suffer from depression. The thoughts that I was having and how I was feeling about myself was so off.” She was prescribed anti-depressants and on the first night she took the medication,

Chappa experienced one of her most testing moments to date. Sitting in a bathtub, Chappa found herself contemplating taking her own life. She remembers crying and struggling with dark thoughts before her husband rushed in to help her. Soon after the episode, Chappa began feeling better. She credits her recovery to prayer and her ambitious approach to launching her first fashion line,

Maison de Urbana. “I picked up a pad and pencil,” recalls Chappa. “The first thing I started to do was sketch. I sketched my first collection and was done in 6 months.” Soon after her collection was completed, Chappa was invited to New York Fashion Week where it was presented at the Metropolitan. In videos taken of the runway show, a confident Chappa walks out at the end of the show holding her two kids’ hands. “That collection was about empowering women and having a voice,” she says. People praised her unique designs, which included gowns and outfits accompanied by Burqas, as a tribute to her father’s middle eastern roots.

Urbana has her kids’ names tattooed, including the name of a young girl named Talia Castellanos who Chappa helped launch a mini fashion line before the young girl passed away due to cancer. Chappa’s eye for fashion has landed her jobs on TV, where she’s been hired to dress child actors for such shows as Netflix’s *Jane the Virgin*. Next on her agenda? A children’s book and multiple other projects including a shot at recording a single. “I’m a mom of four who gave up her dreams so her husband can complete his” says Chappa who was a backup vocalist before meeting her husband. “Now it’s all going full circle. I’m not perfect but I want to try hard and make a difference.”

KRISTY SANDOVAL

Empowerment Through Art

Photo By Tapatio Flores

During one of Kristy Sandoval's recent mural commissions, the 34-year-old mom from Pacoima was standing on a scaffold plank with a paint roller in hand. Down below, her five-year-old daughter looked up, realizing her mom was *at it* again.

"There was a time when every mural she saw, she thought I'd painted," says Sandoval of her daughter. "Seeing me do this, makes me feel like she's not going to have any limits."

Earlier this year, Sandoval completed a painting on the exterior wall of a Coin Laundry in San Fernando. Her project—a colorful illustration of children playing with bubbles escaping from a washing machine—is bright and powerful.

To date, Sandoval has been responsible for approximately 30 public murals in Los Angeles. Two of those massive art displays—her biggest murals so far, are currently on display along Slauson Avenue in South L.A.

Sandoval studied Interactive Media Design at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco where she was influenced by the artistic culture and freedom of the city. In 2007, she returned to the San Fernando Valley.

"When I came back home, I noticed that Pacoima didn't have the same feel (as San Francisco). "I woke up one morning and said, 'I'm going to paint a mural.'"

In order to make it happen, Sandoval initiated an outreach campaign where she contacted nonprofits, civic leaders, old acquaintances and friends. Eventually, she was connected to then-L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's office, which funded one of her first projects.

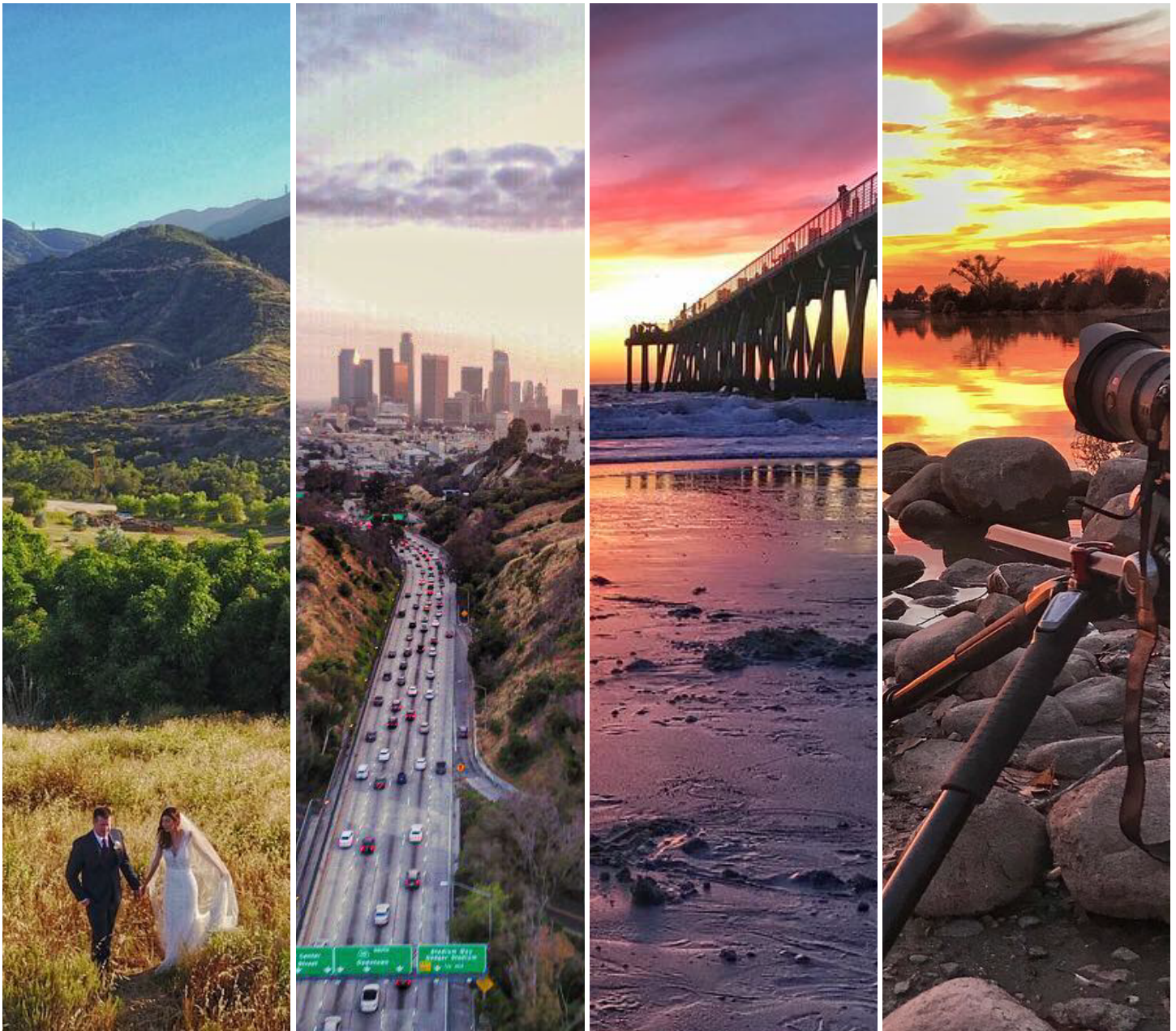
In 2011, Sandoval became a mother. She gave birth to a baby girl, which moved her to seek a more stable, full-time job but also deepened her commitment to the arts and women empowerment.

"(My daughter) has access to all the paints and canvases at home. It's something to promote creativity, problem-solving. Art can help someone think outside of the box."

In terms of balancing her career as an artist and her role as a mother, Sandoval admits it was difficult at first but things have since gotten easier. Her daughter is as much an apprentice as she is a companion, she says.

And when it comes to explaining to the little girl what mom does for a living, Sandoval keeps it simple: "I bring her with me".





Los Angeles

A E R I A L I M A G E

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Natasha Estrada

SHE WAS TOLD HER PREGNANCY WOULD END HER CAREER IN SHOWBIZ. BUT THE SINGLE L.A. MOM DIDN'T STOP AND THE ARRIVAL OF HER SON CAME WITH A SURPRISING OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM AT SOLD-OUT SHOWS AROUND THE WORLD.

BY ANABEL MARQUEZ

PHOTOS BY RACHEL CARRILLO

HAIR: FRANCES MARQUEZ | MAKEUP: MONICA NIDAY | WARDROBE STYLING: IRENE MARQUEZ

It's been over a decade since Natasha Estrada took the stage at the world-famous Viva Las Vegas Rockabilly Festival and left home with the event's most distinguished title—*Miss Viva Las Vegas*.

The year was 2007 and Estrada had become a popular performer in Southern California, known for her stage name, “La Cholita.”

Not too long before that, Estrada's mom, an artist who believed in her daughter's charisma and stage potential had taken the young Estrada to watch a burlesque show headlined by internationally acclaimed Burlesque dancer, Dita Von Teese.

Estrada, who was born and raised in Highland Park, was fascinated.

“(Burlesque) really encompassed so many things that I love...designing and costuming and glamour and music and movement and sensuality,” she says.

Using her grandfather's 1940's L.A. Pachuco influence and her Mexican culture as inspiration, Estrada began designing colorful costumes. One of them included a Mariachi hat. Another incorporated the colorful pattern of a Mexican sarape. A third ensemble was a vibrant take on a Flamenco dress.

She asked a local club promoter for an opportunity to dance on stage between acts.

“After some hesitation he was like, ‘ok, we'll try it out,’” recalls Estrada.

“And it was a hit!”

Her bright costumes and her ability to elegantly remove them on stage through a series of sensual dance moves made her stand out.

“I was paying homage to our culture and my grandpa's upbringing,” says Estrada. “There wasn't much representation of Latinas in the burlesque world.”

Men and women everywhere were happy to see a curvy woman dance with confidence.

Myrna Delvalle, for example, a fan who has been following Estrada's career for several years says she first caught a glimpse of Estrada on Facebook.

“I thought immediately...‘heck yes!’ It's about time we have a model who is not only Latina but someone who embraces her curves,” says Delvalle.

After getting crowned Miss Viva Las Vegas in 2007, Estrada's career took off. First, with an international tour, then as a spokesmodel for Burlesque-inspired *Bordello* shoes and a series of other engagements. She had gained loyal fans around the world that would send her compliments, gifts and letters.



“I'm raising a little boy. I'm setting an example of what a love relationship is.”





“I was paying homage to our culture and my grandpa’s upbringing,” says Estrada. “There wasn’t much representation of Latinas in the burlesque world.”

MOTHERHOOD, HEARTBREAK AND SUCCESS

Four years after the Viva Las Vegas title, Natasha Estrada got pregnant.

With her pregnancy came the realization that she was going to be a single mom. “My pregnancy was really difficult for me,” remembers Estrada. “I wasn’t in a supportive relationship at all. Looking back, it makes me kind of sad. I felt very disconnected, going through a breakup on my own.”

Adding to her heartbreak was the fact that people started suggesting that motherhood would, in essence, end her career in show business.

She says she started receiving discouraging comments such as: “Well, you gave it your best shot” and “your career is done” and “at least you had a good run.”

“People almost expected me or wanted me to stop,” says Estrada. “It really made me see that motherhood is seen as the end, like you’re just falling into the abyss.”

Estrada delivered her son, Valentino, in 2011. She was depressed, lonely and

working a nine-to-five to provide for her newborn. She had gained weight through her pregnancy and couldn’t find a way to remain optimistic about much. One afternoon, as she was driving home from work, Estrada received an email from Dita Von Teese.

Von Teese was recruiting unique acts for her popular *Strip, Strip Hooray* Tour and had sent out a Tweet asking her fans to name the best LA burlesque performer. The Twitter community went abuzz alerting Von Teese about Estrada’s talent.

Von Teese got a hold of Estrada and not only complimented her fire and passion on stage, she invited her to join the cast of *Strip Strip Hooray*.

“For me to be in such a low, dark place... it was like everything had cosmically aligned,” says Estrada with tears in her eyes. “I told myself ‘you can do this. You have this power.’ It was even greater being a bigger size.”

Estrada got to travel the world with Von Teese and oftentimes took Valentino

along. What started as an opportunity to work alongside the woman she had once admired on stage—became a supportive friendship.

Von Teese has since invited Estrada to join her tour, on separate occasions. At home, Estrada stays involved with her son’s extra-curricular activities. She has served as a coach for Valentino’s basketball and soccer teams. They make frequent visits to L.A. public libraries and have memberships at the Autry Museum of the American West, where Valentino loves to learn about Native American cultures.

“I am raising a little boy,” says Natasha. “I’m setting an example of what a love relationship is.”

Regarding her career in show business: “I don’t hide what I do. He’s been coming to shows with me ever since he was a little kid. He’s not exposed to anything that I believe is inappropriate,” explains Estrada.

“At the same time, I think it’s important for him to see that his mom is an empowered, confident, sexual woman. A woman that is not afraid to own who I am.”



THOUGHTS ON SELF-LOVE FROM NATASHA

- You can always strive for improvement but don't wait to start loving yourself when you lose ten pounds, or wait to ask a guy out, or buy a dress or take those photos! Do whatever you want to do and begin your journey now.
- You are enough, you are magnificent, give yourself credit for all you have been through and are going through and STOP comparing yourself to other people.
- You bring something to this world that nobody else can, not even the people you look up to. It's never too late to try or become anything you've wanted.

“IT REALLY ENCOMPASSED SO MANY THINGS THAT I LOVE...DESIGNING AND COSTUMING AND GLAMOUR AND MUSIC AND MOVEMENT AND SENSUALITY.”

FASHION SPOTLIGHT: THE BIG PAYBACK

A Nichole Lynel Experience | #TheNLExperience

EVERY PARTY COULD USE A LITTLE NICHOLE LYNEL.

THIS YEAR, THE LOS ANGELES FASHION ARTIST, WHO TASTEFULLY MODELS HER OWN DESIGNS, WELCOMED A SELECT CROWD TO A DAZZLING EXPERIENCE AT A HOME IN THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS. GUESTS WHO ATTENDED “THE BIG PAYBACK” ENJOYED A ONE-OF-A-KIND CELEBRATION WHICH OFFERED A GLIMPSE OF LYNEL’S SUCCESSFUL COMEBACK, ONE YEAR AFTER HAVING NEARLY “LOST IT ALL,” SHE SAID.

For *The Big Payback*, Lynel showcased her creativity both in fashion and interior design by producing lavish activations in each one of the home’s rooms.

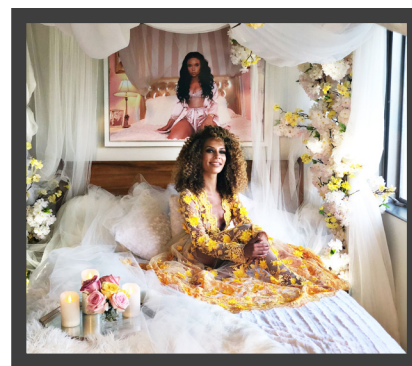
The master bedroom, for example, was an over-the-top money scene, with stacks of faux hundred dollar bills covering the bed, floors and fixtures. The bathroom had dollar bill toilet rolls while gold coins and pearl necklaces covered the bathtub. Models posed for photos wearing sequin outfits and blinged out ensembles.

In the main living room, a massive mirror ball exhibit encompassed 70’s glamour and led people downstairs where Lynel’s work station was staged as a real-life designer’s space— messy desk, textile



swatches and fashion sketches, included.

And if that wasn’t enough to give attendees proof that Lynel’s moment was truly *the big payback*, an outdoor bar, offering guests flower-garnished drinks below a pool of roses stood facing a runway where Lynel introduced her latest collection, all while 70’s music played in the background.



“In everything that I do, I try to serve the glamorous girl on the go,” said Lynel. “For me, this is my big chance. I had a previous business and I walked away...I left with nothing. This time I launched in September and I’ve been *paying it back* ever since.”



Lynel credited her grandmother as the inspiration behind the themed fashion experience.



“I was raised by my grandmother. She is absolutely beautiful and absolutely amazing. I’m just realizing as an adult who she was. This one’s for her.”

TESS NGUYEN FROM NO SUCH AGENCY

As the public relations coordinator at No Such Agency, Tess Nguyen knows fashion. She also knows that the demands of motherhood sometimes make it challenging to look and feel fashionable every single day.

Still, Nguyen believes that moms in Los Angeles have something unique to consider every time they're faced with making outfit decisions—the city's great weather. "Being a mom and working in fashion, I can tell you there's something about the sun that makes us feel like it's a good day and we need to look good," says Nguyen. "It's always nice, sunny and warm."

At No Such Agency, a multi-faceted boutique agency specializing in fashion, media, music, art and lifestyle related industries, Nguyen works with designers, celebrities and creative services companies to help clients build beautiful brands. One of those clients is L.A.-based *Kut from the Kloth*, which she highlights as a great brand whose designs appeal to "moms on the go".

"They design denim and jackets that are curvy and flexible so moms will feel very fashionable and comfortable all the time," says Nguyen.



YOLANDA JAMISON OF SEW CONTAGIOUS

At the tender age of five, Yolanda Jamison used a needle and thread to sew a bathing suit out of an old yellow curtain with a floral pattern. The little girl from Los Angeles was living in Mississippi with her grandmother who was a talented seamstress. Jamison wanted to follow in her grandma's footsteps and make outfits of her own.

When she finished her bathing suit, she proudly put it on and jumped into a swimming pool. The loosely sewn hem quickly came apart, causing her first self-made clothing item to disassemble in the water.

"I probably didn't put a knot at the end," Jamison recalls with a cheerful laugh. "That's the first time I can remember sewing."

Since then, Jamison has never stopped sewing. She's the owner of *Sew Contagious*, a unique company that offers on location sewing classes for kids and adults in Los Angeles County.

"Sewing gets the kids to think differently.

They can't have a phone with them. You can see the kids calm down because they're interested in getting their project completed," she says. Jamison also sells clothing on Etsy and works with theater companies frequently creating hundreds of costumes for big productions. She works from her home studio where she has a neatly organized room full of thread, ribbon, fabrics, appliques and sewing machines. Ironically, the crafty Los Angeles mom never took a formal sewing class. She never attended fashion school, nor did she work for any fashion design companies. Her only experience came from watching her grandmother build perfectly tailored garments from scratch, in Mississippi.

"To me, sewing is therapeutic. It calms me down and relaxes me. In fact, I'm working on a top for me right now."

In 2007, Jamison who was working for a retail department chain was faced with a decision to either relocate out of Los Angeles or lose a job. She decided to stay in Los Angeles, take care of her



own kids and pursue her sewing and fashion dreams. She had already been successful at making her own clothes, including her own wedding gown and she had an inclination to launch her own fashion line. So she went for it. She created a kids fashion line that was picked up by several high end boutiques including *Smooch* owned by the Kardashian sisters in Calabasas. "I was the one doing all the sewing. I was up all night," she recalls. "Looking back, that was kind of crazy."

The kids clothing line became too overwhelming for Jamison during a time when her kids, now ages 18 and 23, needed her most. She redirected her focus and without losing ground on her love for sewing, she opened *Sew Contagious* in 2010. Her advice to moms who want to start a business in Los Angeles: "I would say take the advice you would give to a friend would come to you with their dreams and goals. Take your own advice, you control the fear so it doesn't control you!"

ON LOCATION GLAM®

ON LOCATION GLAM ARRIVES IN LOS ANGELES

On Location Glam, the upscale beauty company that offers professional and luxurious make-up, hair and nail services at the customer's preferred location, had its Los Angeles launch during an invite-only celebration early this year.

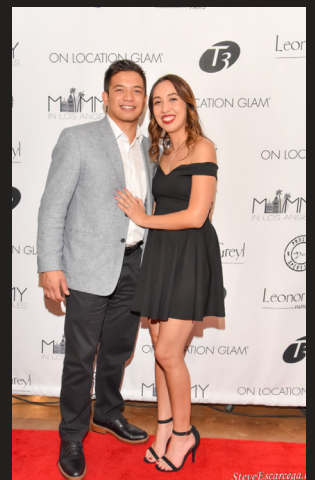
Nearly 100 guests including media, beauty bloggers and influencers attended the launch party held at a private Burbank studio.

The company, whose mission is to make women feel beautiful *All the Glam Time* is owned by cosmetology expert Frances Marquez, who first opened her business in Europe and later in Asia. The company is currently operating with a professional team of hair and makeup artists in Hong Kong and Los Angeles. On Location Glam offers ultra-luxurious makeovers and high end cosmetic products for the modern woman who seeks to look and feel her best.

"The idea of On Location Glam is to provide women a one-of-a-kind experience with the best qualified industry professionals and optimum beauty products," says Marquez. "Every person in our team was recruited with the highest standards. The beauty brands we work with are the finest in the world."

On Location Glam services include top blowouts & hairstyling, flawless makeup applications, and classic manicures. Service appointments begin at \$100.

www.OnLocationGlam.com



Guests went home with a gift from On Location Glam's luxury product partners which served as event sponsors:

Leonor Greyl: The French-based luxury hair product line gifted guests a full-size bottle of its popular *Lait Luminescence Bi-Phase* heat protecting and detangling styling milk.

Bottega Gold Prosecco: Guests went home with a bottle of Bottega Gold Prosecco Mini or Bottega Gold Rose Mini to celebrate in style.

T3 Micro: Known for its line of luxury hair tools that are "beautiful outside, powerful inside" T3 Micro sponsored On Location Glam's Launch Party with their newest Tourmaline ceramic tools, Singlepass Wave and Single-Pass Curl used at the hair stations to style many of the event's guests.

Purlisse Blue Lotus + Seaweed Treatment Mask

LA Mom|Founder: Jennifer Yen
This natural fiber mask infused with Blue Lotus, Seaweed and restorative Asian botanicals delivers antioxidants and minerals to your skin. It's a power blend that soothes & nourishes providing continuous moisture and leaving skin beautiful and radiant. \$36 | www.purlisse.com



L.A. MOM-OWNED BEAUTY & SKINCARE PRODUCTS

Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine celebrates the local mom-owned beauty and skincare brands that are making their mark around the globe. Though there are many more to discover, explore and feature, here are a few of our favorites.

May Lindstrom Skincare, The Blue Cocoon



LA Mom|Founder: May Lindstrom
The balmy blue enchantress greets skin with cool serenity, melting on touch to a fluid potion. Mystical blue tansy eases feelings of emotional anxiety while releasing heat and providing nourishing hydration and relief. \$180 | www.maylindstrom.com

Kosas Cosmetics Contrachroma Bronzing Duo



LA Mom|Founder: Sheena Yaitanes
The Contrachroma by Kosas Cosmetics represents the sun and the moon. The light and the dark. A golden bronzing duo for a radiant, sun-kissed glow or subtle, sophisticated definition. \$34 | www.kosas.com

Sphynx 3-in-1 Portable Razor



LA Mom|Founder: Leila Kashani Manshoory
The original 3-in-1 portable razor is practical and fun. The bright colored disc fits in a purse and includes a small, refillable spray bottle, a pre-shave bar (that won't melt in your car), and a single-blade razor. Each of the components are accessible with a simple twist and click. \$14.99 | www.shopsphynx.com

Ilia Beauty Multi-Stick in Tenderly



LA Mom|Founder: Sasha Plavsic
Ilia's Multi-Stick is soft and demure, Tenderly carries light pink as a base with a touch of blue undertones. The simple, innocent shade will work wonders for those seeking to look freshly blushed. Contains 100% natural dye conveniently packaged for on-the-go application. \$34 | www.iliabeauty.com

I Got It From my Mama!

Besame Cosmetics 1920 – Besame Red Lipstick



LA Mom|Founder: Gabriela Hernandez
Besame's 1920 – Besame Red Lipstick is a true red with a cooler, blue-toned base. Bright, vibrant, and head-turning, this lipstick is a true replica of a color from 1920. It offers a semi-matte finish with one coat full coverage. Plus, it's enriched with squalane, vitamin C, and aloe. \$22 | www.besamecosmetics.com

Ariel Gordon Nail Polish in Yass Queen



LA Mom|Founder: Ariel Gordon
While Ariel Gordon is known for her dainty and lovely jewelry designs, she also has a nail polish line offering colors in rich, creamy hues. The Yass Queen shade is basically a rosé glitter polish. Build up a few layers for an opaque finish, or use it atop another favorite shade. \$16 | www.arielgordonjewelry.com

JENNIFER YEN

THE MOM

BEHIND

PUR-LISSE

Photos By Nancy Ceron

Not long after graduating from college, Jennifer Yen moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in Hollywood, where she quickly landed an acting role as Vypra, the villainous vixen on *Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue*. Yen was excited about the acting opportunity but a few weeks into filming, she became aware of a problem—the heavy makeup she wore up to 15 hours a day on set was damaging her skin. Still, she continued filming for *Power Rangers* for two years and consulted with many dermatologists, trying numerous products, with no results. That’s when she decided to do something about it. In 2008, she used a combination of modern skincare technology and her grandmother’s Asian beauty secrets and created Pur-Lisse, which is French for “pure and smooth”. Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine spent an afternoon with Yen at the Pur-Lisse headquarters in Beverly Hills and learned how this successful mom of a toddler girl has maintained her business for a decade, despite several obstacles along the way.

Q: Tell us more about your grandmother and the inspiration behind your line.

Yen: My grandmother never assimilated to American culture. She never knew what hydrogen peroxide or rubbing alcohol was. When we’d get cuts, we’d always have white tea, or black tea or



green tea either brewing or at room temperature, and my grandmother would use that on our cuts and rashes because they’re anti-bacterial. Soy milk was also staple. She would make soy milk and we would drink it, she’d also wash her face with it because it left her with a beautiful, porcelain-like appearance. And then there was blue lotus, which is a very spiritual water lily that has amazing beautifying benefits and a strong spiritual meaning. It means resurrection and evolution. The entire flower can be

consumed. We would brew tea with the lotus leaves and sauté the seeds to put on our vegetables. The lotus root was steamed and we would put sesame oil over it and eat it that way.

Q: So with these memories you had from childhood, at what point did it click that you needed to incorporate your grandmother’s teachings and apply them to a skincare brand?

Yen: That was always part of my mission. When I spoke with my chemist, at the time he explained

there were many labs where you can go and put your name on a product, but I knew that wasn't going to be our angle. The only thing I had going for me was my heritage, my grandmother's beauty secrets, so that's what differentiated us and I knew this. But not only that, it works and it's five thousand years of this tradition of Asian beauty secrets that have been used by generations of women!

Q: You launched in January 2008. How did that go?

Yen: It was great. It was steadily growing for ten months but then the economy crashed. People all of a sudden weren't really investing in themselves. They were basically trying to make sure there was enough food on the table and keep a roof over their heads. Our price point at the time was higher. We were in a lot of iconic, specialty retail stores but some of them stopped carrying beauty products, a lot of them shut down and some of them couldn't take on the risk because we didn't have the big advertising budgets to bring awareness.

Q: So what did you do at that point?

Yen: Like the lotus flower, we had to resurrect ourselves, evolve and re-invent. I was like, 'Okay, what do I do?' So I pulled back from the market, and had to rethink. I restructured the business to reflect the tone of the country and what was going on with the economy. The first step was to lower our pricing. We had fancier packaging so we eliminated that but we never compromised the quality. I felt it was important to have high quality products at a great price.

Q: Wow. Love the Lotus Flower reference! You didn't give up and figured out a way to keep going. When did your daughter come into the picture?

Yen: Gemma was born in 2014. I'm a single parent now, a co-parenting mom. At the time, her dad and I were together and Pur-lisse was starting to have legs again. I realized I had to put the pedal to the metal because I had a growing baby



but there was uncertainty in my relationship. Gemma's dad is great, but we weren't on the same track. I feel so grateful that as my belly was growing, Pur-lisse started growing, slowly, but surely.

Q: How was the delivery? Did you experience baby blues or anything that kept you distracted from the business?

Yen: I gave birth on a Friday. By Monday I was back. There could be no disruption to work. And I know that sounds crazy but everybody's situation is different. I was active and my mind was on, 'We have a lot of things we have to do!' so I didn't really give myself a moment to (have baby blues). My mom was there to help me and Gemma's dad was there too. I was just enjoying the baby, taking care of the baby and working!

Q: Now that Gemma is three-years-old, does she ask questions? Do you explain what mommy does?

Yen: I tell her, "Mommy creates." She knows I'm an entrepreneur, she knows mommy makes beauty products.

Q: What is your advice for keeping true to yourself while following your goals?

Yen: I always say, 'You just have to keep moving'. You have to keep moving because when I think about my own trajectory, I thought I was going to be an actress, and yes, I was for a moment. But then my skin got bad, and I really listened to myself. At Pur-Lisse we are inclusive, we value diversity, we are multicultural and it shows with our entire team. We like to empower women. What you see now is the result of a decision made ten years ago to never give up. This is a dream from ten years ago. That and also knowing that you don't know what's next unless you stay *in the trenches*, meaning if you don't keep moving, you're never going to know what's next.



The Designing Chica

Susana Sanchez-Young

To meet Susana Sanchez-Young is to meet an energetic and passionate woman as dynamic as the city she was born in—Hollywood.

She has a love for dance, an eye for color and a talent for design. Her talent is such that after spending seven years at East LA Community College, and without actually graduating, she landed some of the most sought-after newsroom jobs in the nation, including an 8-year gig at the Washington Post, where she designed and illustrated breaking news and feature pages alongside editors and writers who have won numerous Pulitzer Prizes.

“I knew early in my life that I was different. I had too much energy and I drove my parents crazy,” says Sanchez-Young.

In time, her immigrant parents of Guatemalan and Nicaraguan descent realized their daughter was *crazy about life*.

“At parties when I was a child, my mom would have to drag me off the dance floor. At school...I practiced the Cabbagepatch, the Wop, the KidnPlay and all those 80’s hip hop moves,” she recalls.

“I wanted to be a dancer, but I didn’t have a dancer’s body, but

it never stopped me from actually auditioning for the dance drill team in high school and the dance company in college, both of which I nailed!” recalls Sanchez-Young.

Last year, during a mother’s day social event in Downtown LA, Sanchez-Young cheerfully greeted customers and kids who stopped by her table. The table had a rich display of colorful prints, greeting cards and other artwork she has designed as part of her own business, *The Designing Chica*. Her mother stood by her side assisting with the sales of the prints and answering questions from curious shoppers.

“My parents taught me I had to work for every penny,” says Sanchez-Young. “I had to earn everything and that was my mantra in life: Work extra hard to stand out and grow.”

In the early 2000s Sanchez-Young was working at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, quickly moving up the ranks and landing a position in management when her boyfriend accepted a job offer in Virginia.



Without thinking twice and despite not being engaged, she left her comfortable job to follow her heart.

"I found the man I was looking for in South Florida and he was leaving for Virginia. I decided to follow him" she recalls. "Much to the chagrin of my friends!"

But something about Sanchez-Young's approach to life and her undeniable talent for graphic design resonated well in the nation's capital. The visual journalist from Los Angeles was suddenly interviewing with some of the nation's top editors for a position that her colleagues would only dream of, at the Washington Post.

As she explains it, "I was a nervous wreck but I was myself".

The editors loved her and they loved her work. In 2009, she won the prestigious Society of News Design award for a body of work from the Washington Post. That same year, she got married to her Asian-American boyfriend, the man she had followed from Florida.

Eventually the couple and their two kids made it back to California and



Sanchez-Young currently works for a design group that supplies artwork for 30+ newspapers. She also designs her kids' birthday party decorations and frequently gets hired by individuals and companies as a freelancer to design logos and artwork. She also sells her own line of unique prints at festi-

vals— all while managing a household and raising her son and daughter to embrace both their Asian and Latino cultures.

She attributes the success that follows her everywhere, to one thing: "I never stop dreaming of my next step while kicking butt in the moment."



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CRYSTAL

The Mom, The Actor, The Webseries

Crystal Correa didn't wait for a return call from a casting director after having moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting five years ago. Instead, she created her own film company, wrote and directed a self-titled webseries and starred in her own production.

Crystal the webseries is a 15-minute, 6-episode production categorized in both comedy and drama genres. It's based on a younger Correa's perspectives on trending topics as well as life with a roommate in Los Angeles.

"I wanted Crystal to stay fun and happy. She's everyone's friend," explains Correa.

She filmed and completed her project within two months, while pregnant.

"It's so incredible when I think, 'I became a mom in L.A.," she says. "L.A. matured me."

As her pregnancy advanced, Correa knew timing was of the essence. Plus, she was counting on friends and industry acquaintances to help, despite her limited budget. That meant she had to set some parameters before filming began.

"I'm the type of director that will do three takes. After the third take, if we haven't gotten it, we probably won't," she told her crew.

They shot the entire webseries in five days, most of which was done in Echo Park.

"Echo Park is the one place that really opened itself up to me. It's the one place that really accepted me," says Correa.

Once she wrapped up post-production, her pregnancy was reaching the second trimester and Correa knew she needed to slow down. At that point, she directed her energy toward the marketing of her webseries.

"If I wasn't pregnant, I would have kept going," she says.

With her 6-episode production completed and submitted to numerous film festivals, Correa took some time off.

She gave birth to her son Rey, who is almost two-years-old, and adapted to life as a new mom which came with a bout of postpartum depression.

As she battled negative thoughts and feelings and sought professional help to get better, it was announced that *Crystal the webseries*, had been officially selected for the popular Holly Shorts Film Festival. *Crystal the webseries* also made it to the first annual Mammoth Film Festival.

Before 'Crystal'

Correa was born in Seoul, South Korea to Puerto Rican parents. The family was living in Asia because her dad was stationed there on behalf of the U.S. Military. She spent her childhood relocating to different cities until finally settling in Virginia where she was working as a hair and makeup artist.

Being in the beauty industry, Correa was hired to work on the set of a film production as a hair stylist for the cast. She says the experience of being surrounded by actors, cameras and "chaos" led to her decision to move to Los Angeles.

"That job triggered me to save money, do the research and move," says Correa. "I packed my life in a car, road tripped with one of my friends and [once we arrived] crashed at another friend's couch for about a month."

Along the way, she met her boyfriend Carlos, with whom she's raising their son Rey. He supports her and watches their toddler while she focuses on Season two of *Crystal the webseries*.

Next on her agenda?

"With Rey, I want to do more family friendly projects."



Photography by Rachel Carrillo

How we Can Support Fellow Moms With Autistic Children

We Need Each Other

By Susana Marquez

This year, the Center for Disease Control CDC increased its estimate of autism's prevalence by 15 percent, to 1 in 59 children.

Being a mother is challenging enough. But having a child with autism presents a whole different set of challenges that many of us are not familiar with.

As a community of mothers, we should come together and support fellow moms with autistic children. Here are a few simple ways to do so:

Learn about autism. A great way to connect with a family with autistic children is to simply learn about autism. Not only is it good to have a better understanding but knowing about the condition may help a fellow mom feel supported. You can ask questions and let her know you're coming from a place of empathy, in order to better support her.

Be a good listener. Your mom friend is likely experiencing plenty of rough day that include therapy and doctor visits and a constant flurry of new diagnostic information. Be compassionate and understanding. Allow her to have a safe space to vent and provide her a *pick-me-up* if she needs one, whether by thinking of her during your morning coffee run or buying her a good tube of lipstick when you're at a beauty counter. Nice gestures go a long way.

Plan a girl's day out. Invite her to lunch, make a spa reservation or go to a movie together. If she has other children offer to babysit when you have a chance. If you are both comfortable with it, offer to babysit the child with autism. This would allow her some valuable time to focus on self-care.



Join her cause. Help her advocate for autism awareness by attending meetings with her, registering for autism events, or fundraising to help with expenses.

Moms whose children are diagnosed with autism may be feeling overwhelmed and depleted. They may not return your phone calls, texts, or emails immediately. Be understanding and remind them they have your support.

Coming together as a community is what makes us stronger. If you know someone whose child has been di-

agnosed with autism, lend a helping hand. You may be providing that mom a much needed ray of light.

For more information on autism, visit www.autismspeaks.org.

Feel Empowered. Feel Strong. Feel Validated, Mamas.

Susana Marquez is a Wellness contributor for Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine. She's also a licensed Marital and Family Therapist and the Founder of Long Beach-based Me, Myself n' Mommy, a support service for moms suffering perinatal mood disorders.

ALL ABOUT THE KIDS



Cece Hendriks:

Giving Moms a Chance to Spoil the Kids

There's a children's boutique along Melrose Avenue in Hollywood where the dance music is bumping loud. A vintage Mercedes Benz toy car hangs over an array of charming, high-end kids' threads. The energizing atmosphere puts you in a shopping mindset and on a nearby rack, a Jean Paul Gaultier girl's dress has just been placed by a cheerful and charismatic woman named Cece Hendriks. She's the owner of *Spoiled!*, a luxury resale kids clothing shop.

"I started online for three years," says Hendriks. "I had a showroom on Wilshire and then I told my husband, 'honey, what do you think about getting us a store!'"

Hendriks, who was once a stay-at-home mom, loves fashion and she makes sure her son Jordan always looks his best too.

"My mom would always say— If I'm looking good, I represent this household, so you better walk out here looking just as good as I am," recalls Hendriks.

A few years ago, when she found herself giving away her son's designer outfits because the young boy was constantly outgrowing them, Hendriks got an idea. She noticed that no other place in Los Angeles had an exclusive resale children's clothing store.

"I started thinking, 'I gotta' do something, I just gotta' do something!"

In March 2015, *Spoiled!* on Melrose Avenue had its star-studded grand opening.

Three years later, the shop is thriving. Hendriks has an organized price tagging system where customers can drop off their own gently used children's clothing and split the profits. She's extremely particular about the clothing items she accepts though. Everything that makes it to the sales floor, which is generally priced far below the original retail tag, is free of tears, stains or marks. And many of her celebrity customers appreciate that.

"My husband didn't really want me to work," says Hendriks. "But I told him this would be a gold mine!"

Letitia Fox:

Bringing Old School Play Back for Kids

A few days before Letitia Fox would travel to Dallas for the 2017 Toy Association's Fall Preview event, she worked in an ample garage in Pasadena assembling toy boxes with colorful items.

In the *Pirate* box, she placed two foam swords, plastic eye patches and a scroll, among other items.

In the *Rockstar Diva* box, she carefully folded a pair of black tutus with glittery detail and materials required to create a DIY microphone, with a set of colored markers.

Fox was preparing to officially launch her kids' activity concept labeled "Playdate In a Box" and pitch it to major toy manufacturers.

"I'm inspired to create this movement to bring old school play back for children," she says.

When her son Dante was three-years-old, Fox was introduced to the world of *play dates*. She says her first thought was: 'Oh my goodness! I have a career... and I'm not a crafty mom!'"

Fox, who has appeared in Television commercials, produced shows and worked as a TV host and motivational speaker, was constantly looking for games where kids could engage with one another, without the stress of coming up with DIY activities for them.

She would often take the kids on park and museum outings and when they ran out of places to explore, the idea of "Playdate In A Box" was born.

"It inspires them to socially interact with one another," says Fox. "Children today are becoming more isolated and they're more dependent upon technology than each other. Social anxiety is real!"

So far, she's brainstormed twenty-two play ideas for kids, ages 3-9 to play in groups of two or more. Of the twenty-two concepts, five have been fully developed, assembled and packaged into *play dates* in a box currently on sale at a few local toy shops and on her website, www.artfulplaydate.com, for \$30-\$35 each. They include: Pirate Adventure, Super Power Girl, Super Power Boy, Rockstar Diva and Rockstar Dude.

"When you have a passion and you have a dream...go for it," she says. "I was inspired by my children. I invested in this inventory and I'm going to give it my all."



Bryson Reaume

When Words Become Change



Bryson's Books, a socially conscious children's book company operating out of Los Angeles, is reinventing the power of the children's book and LA Moms have a unique opportunity to be a part of this change.

Founder Bryson Reaume, a former U.S. Army Combat Medic, pilot, construction worker, business owner, real estate investor, socially conscious entrepreneur, and father of two, has a straightforward philosophy that drives his work— "no matter what you do in life, you can always give back," he says.

Since the launch of Bryson's Books, he has visited several locations in L.A. County as part of the Author Visit program where he offers readings and spreads the word about how the books are helping children in need.

The company pledges 25% of its profits to organizations making real change in the U.S. Most recently, in light of the current humanitarian crisis affecting immigrant families at our southern border, Bryson's Books partnered with HeyMamas4Change, pledging to donate 30% of its profits to the American Civil Liberties Union and the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES).

To date, Bryson's Books has directed its efforts to literacy programs, poverty alleviation, leadership and mentorship organizations. The book collection not only aims to teach children valuable lessons about compassion and acceptance through its colorfully illustrated stories, it's also inspiring entrepreneurs to be socially conscious and use their business to create positive change.



BRYSON'S BOOKS

Bryson's Books is a company based on the idea that no matter what you do in life, you can always give back! With that philosophy in mind, we started Bryson's Books with the pledge of giving 25% of profits to charities that truly make a difference.

Use code *MOMMY20* at brysonsbooks.com to receive 20% off your entire order.

PLANNING A DISNEY TRIP? DISNEY PARKS MOMS PANEL CAN HELP

By *BETH J. HARPAZ, AP Travel Editor*

If you're contemplating a trip to a Disney park, you may be stressing out about the planning. How far in advance should you book? How does the FastPass work? Are restaurant reservations really necessary?

A good resource for getting advice is the Disney Parks Moms Panel. The 40 panelists provide customized, free answers to questions about Disney vacations (including parks, Disney Cruise Line, Disney resorts and more). Emailed questions are answered in about a week.

A member of the Disney Parks Moms Panel, Lindsey P. of Georgia, spoke to AP's weekly travel podcast "Get Outta Here!". Here are some excerpts from the podcast episode.

Q: Is there a way to predict the parks' busiest days and times?

A: I never schedule a vacation myself without checking the Undercoveatourist.com crowd calendar. They have an uncanny knack to estimate a crowd level on scale of one to 10 ... at whatever park you might want to visit on any given day. You'll see a red X by a park that expects a large crowd due to a festival or an event.

Q: What are some advantages to staying at a Disney property versus off-site accommodations?

A: You get the option to use extra "magic hours" ... where a park may open an hour early or stay open an hour later. Those are only available to Walt Disney World hotel guests.

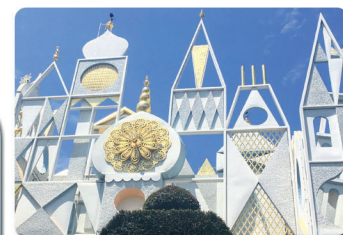
Q: Is it necessary to book restaurants ahead or can you wing it?

A: It depends on your family's style. I have a friend who can only deal with table service reservations. She loves a guaranteed place to sit down with her family. My family likes to do one table service reservation a day, sometimes breakfast, sometimes dinner. We like to take lunch on the fly.

Q: How do you cope when kids have a meltdown in the park?

A: It happens. The four main theme parks offer baby care centers. You might say, 'I don't have a baby, but these areas offer an air-conditioned, quiet place to sit and take in a Disney cartoon ... and a store with sundries and snacks... Also know your family's rhythm. If your kids are early risers, hop up, get that morning meal, head to the park. If your kids are late risers at home, that means you can have a more special lunch, engage in the afternoon parades.

To meet the 2018 Disney Parks Moms Panel and ask a question about your upcoming Disneyland trip, visit www.DisneyParksMomsPanel.com



Lindsey P.

Walt Disney World Resort



Beth S.

Disney Cruise Line



Jan K.

Walt Disney World Resort



Lindsey M.

runDisney



Linda M.

Disneyland Resort



Donyell R.

Walt Disney World



Todd D.

Walt Disney World Resort



Thiana S.

Walt Disney World Resort



Anabel M.

Disneyland Resort



Jennifer C.

Walt Disney World Resort



Emille C.

Walt Disney World Resort



Trish A.

Disney Vacation Club





MEGHAN DEROMA & CHRISTINE PECK

THE SILLY STREET MOMS

Photo: PlaySillyStreet.com

While many families gather around the table casting dice, flicking number wheels or tip-toeing plastic characters across cardboard landscapes, Meghan DeRoma and her sister-in-law Christine Peck have created a board game of their own.

It's a game called Silly Street, where kids and adults get to howl like a wolf, surf on a pillow, engage in thumb wars, create makeshift hats and tell imaginary tales of *tattooed tigers and their tasty treats*, among many other things.

Their board game creation, a giant 40" puzzle board, contains 55 silly cards, 4 solid wood game pieces and a storage bag. The object of the game is to pretend, move, sing and compete your way down *Silly Street*.

"It was a long road leading up to that, but all of a sudden, things are happening!" says DeRoma, who was in charge of the game's tone and writing. She also created all illustrations, designs and artwork.

The game has already won multiple national toy awards and it's being sold at major retail department stores like Toys R Us, Target and Barnes and Noble.

Peck, her Silly Street business partner "speaks business very well," says DeRoma.

Peck is in charge of negotiating contracts, handling licensing issues and monitoring the financials.

"People are really supportive of it. The kids love to be brought along in the process," says DeRoma. "We've had lots of people help us along the way."

FROM A HOSPITAL ROOM TO SILLY STREET

DeRoma moved to Los Angeles from Chicago in 2015 with her husband and son Bodhi, who was 18 months old at the time.

They relocated from the Windy City for work and DeRoma soon became consumed by her job as a marketing professional.

"It was getting really stressful for me. I just wanted to be with Bodhi more. The worst feeling ever is to arrive at day-care and have your kid be the last kid there."

So DeRoma, who has an art and photography background, started sketching. She was also expecting her second child.

"One of the original impetuses to start this was, I always wanted to have my own project and get out of working for somebody else and work for myself," she shares. "I've always wanted to have an art-based *something* and be my own salary maker."

She and Peck got together and started developing their board game idea. It started out with a singular makeshift game made out of laminated sheet paper and sent to friends and family around country. All they wanted in return was honest feedback.

Then, as their board game idea gained traction, DeRoma delivered her second son Ryder who was born with a heart defect and had to have surgery at two weeks old.

"I spent a lot of time in the hospital by myself," says DeRoma. "So I would sit there while he was sleeping and brainstorm stuff."

Ryder's heart surgery proved successful and the young boy is happy and healthy. On the Silly Street game board, there is a small heart with the letter "R" next to it that represents that period in DeRoma's motherhood journey.

"People are really supportive of it. The kids love to be brought along in the process. We've had lots of people help us along the way."

SILLY STREET AND BEYOND

Once Peck and DeRoma were confident that their idea was on the right path, they launched a Kickstarter Campaign that helped them further develop the prototype.

They hosted numerous game nights with neighborhood children, perfected every detail and even let their kids participate in the design.

What they didn't expect, perhaps, was the sudden curiosity they stirred from major companies interested in licensing their product. They were busy exploring such concepts as "How is this going to help a little kid build empathy?" says DeRoma. "How is this going to help a little kid build grit?"

DeRoma and Peck have since launched their company Wannaplé, under which they've also created a series of jigsaw puzzles, a second board game titled Animal Act, and they've developed a line of toys based on characters and illustrations from Silly Street.

"The brand is based on the idea that play builds character and we realized this concept could apply to so many things," says DeRoma.



Great Big Family Play Day



It was a Sunday filled with excitement for Los Angeles families that attended the 5th Annual SoCal Moms Great Big Family Play Day on June 10, 2018.

The massive family festival, held at the Autry Museum's lawn at Griffith Park, introduced parents to hundreds of businesses whose focus aligns with raising healthy, happy kids in Los Angeles.

"What an amazing day of PLAY!," said Heather Booker, the event's host. "We entertained thousands of SoCal families as they danced, played games, ate great food and got one-on-one time with family-friendly businesses."

Performances by The Beat Buds, Jazzy Ash, Love Bug and Me, among others, entertained the children while a kid's fashion show hosted by *Lip gloss and Crayons Blogger* Carly Anderson introduced the crowds to the latest kids' clothing trends.

"It was a ton of fun," said Anderson.

One of the Great Big Family Play Day's main attractions is an organized set-up of vendor booths where friendly business owners and brand representatives arrange play areas for kids, while speaking to parents about their brands.

The Subaru-sponsored tent, for example, had vehicles on display for mom and dad to check out while an enormous bubble party took place for the little ones.

Kids' party companies, such as *Tinseltot*, set-up carefully curated activations decorated with balloons and garland and allowed children to play in their party rentals while engaging parents on the company's offerings.

Many other clothing, baby gear, entertainment and food companies offered samples and distributed information about programs, services and products.

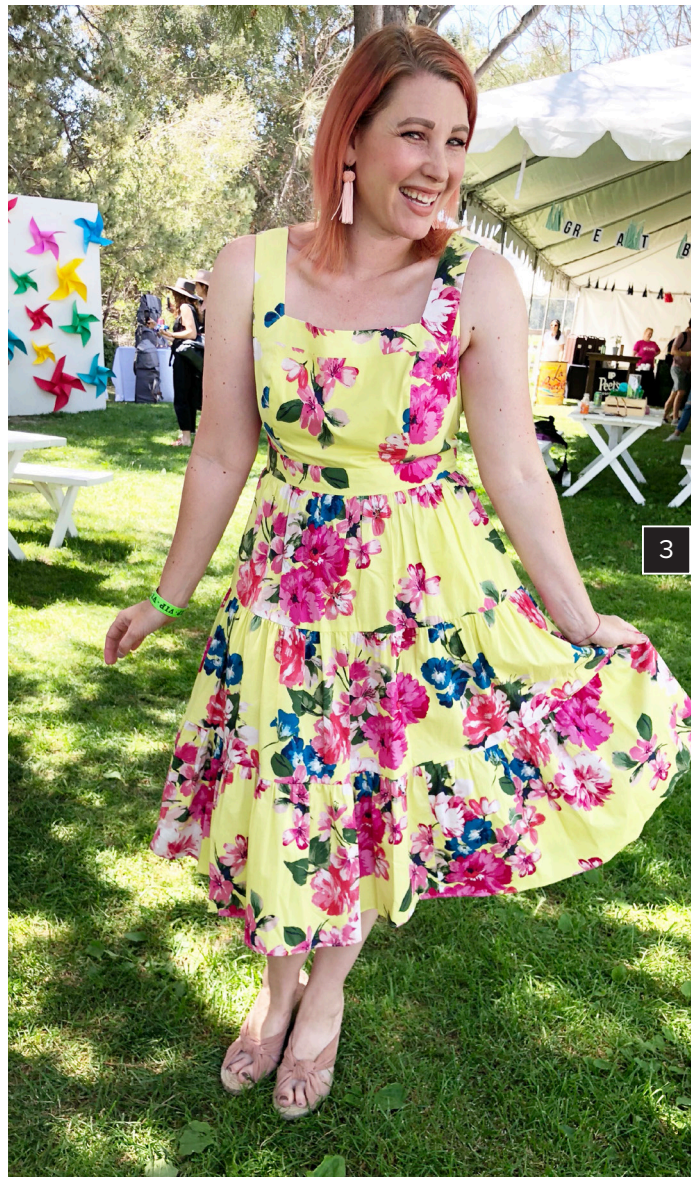
While the Great Big Family Play Day is not a free event (early bird tickets were on sale for \$5 per person), it's proven to offer parents a fun opportunity to shop and learn about different companies that cater to parenting needs, all while giving children a chance to play the entire way through.



Parents who missed this year's Great Big Family Play Day can visit the website and join the Facebook page for news and information regarding next year's event:

www.GreatBigFamilyPlayDay.com

Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine was a media partner at the 5th Annual Great Big Family Play Day.



HAPPY, FUN, *PARK CHIC* MOMS

SUMMER AT THE AUTRY MUSEUM LAWN AT GRIFFITH PARK

MEET SOME OF THE MOMS WHO MADE AN AWESOME EXPERIENCE OUT OF THE GREAT BIG FAMILY PLAY DAY!

1. **NIKKI DIAZ**
SINGER, MOMMY BLOGGER
Nikki looked adorable in dark denim overalls, a black spaghetti-strap tank top and rose pattern sneakers. At the Great Big Family Play Day, she helped her kids paint dream catchers and climb a bouncy slide. She also made a video of the day's activities. Keep smiling, pretty mama!

2. **HEIDI ANDROL-GUZMAN**
BUSINESS OWNER, SPORTS REPORTER
Standing near her Tinseltot set-up, Heidi smiled at our cameras looking gorgeous in a navy blue patterned romper and camel-colored sandals. Plus, the totes she gifted visitors at her booth actually complemented the look quite nicely. Way to go, Heidi!

3. **CARLY ANDERSEN**
TEACHER, MOMMY BLOGGER
During the Great Big Family Play Day, Carly served as the MC for the family fashion show portion of the event. Wearing a pretty, bright yellow dress with pink flowers by Eliza J., Carly set the tone for the event—bright, fun, happy and unforgettable. You're awesome, Carly!

4. **TRACY FREDKIN**
FOUNDER, SO CAL MOMS & CO-FOUNDER, GREAT BIG FAMILY PLAY DAY
The mom behind summer's biggest party kept busy throughout the day, making sure all aspects of the operation ran smoothly. Wearing a seersucker summer dress and sandals, Tracy accessorized her look with fun bracelets and aviator shades. Thank you, #BossMom

5. **HEATHER BROOKER**
ACTRESS, MOMMY BLOGGER
Heather was the Master of Ceremonies during the 5th Annual Great Big Family Play Day. She wore a lovely gray Lane Bryant jumpsuit and thanked her stylist Alexis for giving her encouragement to break out of her style comfort zone. You rocked it, Heather!

LEGOLAND CALIFORNIA

*W*ith the recent inauguration of its Castle Hotel, impressive new attractions, a waterpark and a Sea life Aquarium, the LEGOLAND Resort is becoming a vacation getaway no mom should miss!

LEGOLAND California has grown considerably over the last few years but in 2018, the Merlin Entertainment-owned resort added major features to its property marking its greatest year of growth and introducing the single largest investment for a LEGOLAND Park— the LEGO Deep Sea Adventure Submarine ride.

The resort's media relations manager and fellow mom, Julie Estrada, says it's all part of an ongoing effort to make LEGOLAND a multi-day destination for families with children ages 2-12. Those who want to be fully immersed in the LEGO experience now have more reasons than ever to make a vacation out of it.



LEGO LOVE

We spent a few days exploring LEGOLAND California and found that while park visits can sometimes end with tired, whiny children, LEGOLAND provides a break from the frustration of excessive crowds and long wait lines for food, attractions and restroom use. Even during peak season, there's a comforting feeling of enough *breathing space* so you can relax while the kids have a blast.

We also noticed the walk from the theme park to property hotels is shorter than those of the resort's competitors. In brief, we left home wondering when to plan the next trip. Here are some highlights that prove LEGOLAND is for moms too!



HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS



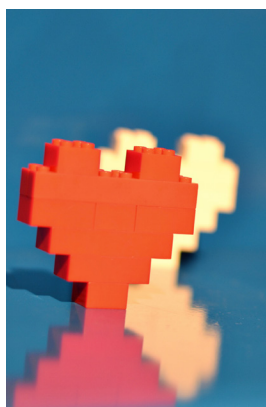
Both the LEGOLAND Hotel and LEGOLAND Castle Hotel offer comfortable themed rooms where kids have separate sleeping quarters furnished with bunk beds, LEGO toys and a TV. It's a comfortable setting where moms get their own space and kids do too.

MODEL MOM BABY CARE CENTER



Tired, nursing and/or moms with potty-training kids can use this dedicated baby center to regroup and recharge. The Model Mom Baby Care Center offers private rooms for nursing or pumping milk, diaper changing stations, a microwave, mini fridge, a purified water dispenser, a medicine "quick relief" center, rocking chairs and even a play area for babies.

MASTER-BUILDERS WANTED



Next to the Model Mom Baby Care Center is the LEGO Life Zone, an air-conditioned building where kids and adults alike can build whatever their creativity deems appropriate (LEGO blocks and characters are supplied). There's a smart phone charging station too. Folks who build the most impressive creations get to leave them on display at a nearby shelf-of-fame!

ADULT DRINKS & SNACKS



At Knight's Smokehouse BBQ inside the LEGOLAND Theme Park, you can order a glass of Pinot or Merlot and enjoy a tasty serving of garlic parmesan veggies or a fire roasted corn on the cob. Even though you're not allowed to take your wine past the outdoor seating area, it's perfect for an impromptu happy hour.

DESSERT & MOMMY TREATS



A short walk away from Knight's Smokehouse BBQ, you can place an order of Granny's Apple Fries. The famous treat featuring cooked Granny Smith apples dusted with cinnamon sugar and other secret ingredients and served with a vanilla cream dipping sauce was invented there...a park favorite!

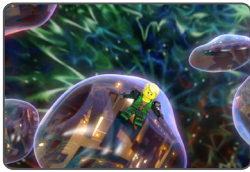
SHOPPING

For moms who like to shop, LEGOLAND has a variety of Brick-tastic options, from clothing and watches to LEGO Brick storage containers and cute backpacks. You won't run out of ways to show the kiddos that mom loves LEGOS too!





LEGOLAND California



1.12.18

LEGO NINJAGO 4D movie opens

- The 12 minute, 4D experience plays 5 times throughout the day at LEGO Showplace Theater at LEGOLAND California
- Kids can join their favorite NINJAGO heroes at a very special dojo training session exclusively at the family theme park



7.2.18

LEGO® City Deep Sea Adventure submarine ride opens

- Largest single investment for LEGOLAND Park to date
- Set in a 300,000 gallon tank, the LEGO City Deep Sea Adventure Submarine Ride experience includes 2,000 live sea animals, interactive touch screens, LEGO scuba divers and sunken treasures
- Up to 12 passengers can board one of eight real submarines designed after the LEGO City Deep Sea Adventure line of toys



4.27.18

LEGOLAND Castle Hotel inauguration

- For your hotel stay, there are three themes to choose from: Knights and Dragons, Magic Wizard and Royal Princess
- In the Grand Hall, kids can enjoy a built-in slide that will come down into the lobby from the first floor above check-in level
- Breakfast is included with each guest's stay and includes made to order items and a buffet
- The Royal Courtyard offers a play yard with activities for kids of all ages.
- 2,100 LEGO models can be seen throughout the Castle Hotel

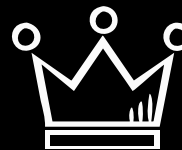
A Beauty Salon for Moms



Mommy's Retreat was established in 2017 by sisters Hermine Abkarian, Rosie Nehme and Angela Kokchyan who've always had a passion for hair, makeup, and all things beauty. The salon features a play area for kids with a babysitter, so mom can have her beauty services and treatments while the little ones play. "Having kids of our own was the creation behind "Mommy's Retreat," says Hermine, who has a background in business management and accounting.

Rosie and Angela are both master stylists and with over 10 years of experience in the beauty industry.

"Rosie is your go-to for extensions and blow-outs. Angela is your go-to for color and makeup," says Hermine. "We have always dreamed of having a business together and Mommy's Retreat was just the perfect solution to every mom's problem including ours."



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Mommy's Retreat



MommysRetreat

Trish Healy WonderTent

By Heather David



“We love seeing that initial WOW reaction. It’s priceless knowing that we’re helping create a lifelong memory. The pack down the next day is great too as we get to hear all about the amazing experiences,” beams Trish.

Los Angeles is always at the forefront of exciting new trends in the event world. WonderTent Parties is no exception, offering chic sleepover and glamping experiences around LA. In addition to their creative service, they’re also giving back to the community in a heartfelt way.

The founder, Trish Healy came up with the idea for the company after the recent adoption of her 14-year old daughter, Celia.

THE HEALY FAMILY



Before becoming part of the Healy family, Celia had been in the LA foster system and had never experienced the quintessential sleepover. Trish was determined to create a magical overnight experience for her new daughter.

“I think we all can remember back to a fun sleepover we had as kids. It’s a coming of age moment really and gives kids a sense of independence,” Trish explains.

The sleepover was a huge success and motivated Trish to leave her corporate job to create WonderTent Parties.

“I was building on a concept that was gaining popularity in my home country of Australia, I put my own twist on it and evolved and expanded the concept with specially curated themes and our GlampIn experience to make this a truly five-star experience.”

Gone are the sleeping bags or couch cushions and in their place they create a communal, shared experience space with each child

getting their own handcrafted A-frame WonderTent complete with plush mattress and luxurious bedding and blankets.

In their first year, WonderTent Parties has thrown a variety of bespoke events ranging from cozy campfire themed overnights to intimate candle light dinners under the stars.

“We love seeing that initial WOW reaction. It’s priceless knowing that we’re helping create a lifelong memory. The pack down the next day is great too as we get to hear all about the amazing experiences,” beams Trish.

While WonderTent Parties is all about dreaming up fun experiences, they also honor their roots. For every party they throw, they donate a portion of their proceeds to Kidsave, an organization that looks to find lasting adult connections and forever families for older foster youth.

“It’s through Kidsave we met our daughter so it’s a nice way to give back. We call it our Good InTent Program.”

Teaching
Creativity,
Confidence &
Compassion!

PHOTOS BY NANCY CERON



Elise Robertson & Kathryn Winslow

THE EASTSIDE ARTS MOMS

Elise Robertson and Kathryn Winslow are working actors. They're also teachers.

And they're moms who were each pursuing the same goals and aspirations before finding each other and becoming a team.

The two women are friends and business partners, currently running Eastside Arts, a children's acting school in Highland Park that offers a fun and non-competitive environment for children ages three to 18. Their acting curriculum focuses on listening, speaking, teamwork and imagination.

In 2015, Robertson and Winslow each ran their own acting school, mostly geared toward kids, not too far from one another. Their approach to acting

lessons was very similar in that they focused on creating environments that were pressure-free and fun for the children. Parents loved their concept and each one had a favorable roster of young clients.

But as much as they embraced their teaching roles, Robertson and Winslow also loved their acting roles. And that didn't make things easy whenever they were invited to audition at a promising casting call. The two moms would find themselves struggling to make arrangements at home and at their respective acting schools.

"You celebrate so much getting an acting gig but your world falls apart because you have all these pieces that you need to sew together,"

"Our philosophy is all about life skills. You learn about people, compassion. Listening is a big, big part of acting."

— Elise Robertson, co-owner Eastside Arts

explained Winslow. "Nobody understands the *last-minuteness* of acting more than another actor."

Eventually, their paths crossed.

Winslow attended one of Robertson's adult acting classes. They instantly bonded over many things in common, including the fact that they each have two daughters.

By August 2016, they decided to join forces and open Eastside Arts. They brought their students together and a year-and-a-half later, their school has proven to be a hit with classes ranging from improvisation to filmmaking for kids. Currently, they're accepting enrollment applications for winter classes, beginning in January.



“Our philosophy is all about life skills. You learn about people, compassion. Listening is a big, big part of acting,” says Robertson. “You learn how to use your voice, your imagination and those are acting skills that kids don’t necessarily get at school.”

The two moms have learned to work well together. They make it a point to set aside Wednesday mornings to discuss Eastside Arts, and each handles a different aspect of the business.

“Thank god Elise has a huge amount of savvy with websites and has taught me a lot,” says Winslow.

“And thank god Kathryn is so organized with schedules,” says Robertson giggling as she looks over to Winslow.

“We have a good *ying yang* thing going on,” says Winslow.



More about **ELISE ROBERTSON**

“A good actor is not looking to be seen on stage, a good actor is looking to communicate some truth about life.”

- Originally from Pittsburgh, PA
- Graduated from Northwestern University's theater department with a minor in fine art.
- Acting teacher and coach for 15 years
- In 2000, she moved to Los Angeles
- Northern California Emmy & CINE-Golden Eagle Award winning director
- Dozens of TV & Film Credits (including 2014 Oscar nominee, American Sniper)
- Mother of two daughters, ages 11 & 12



More about **KATHRYN WINSLOW**

“I'm really working on helping kids to learn to recover from failure... If a classroom experiment goes terribly, I try to figure out how to recover and they have ideas to make it better.”

- Originally from Quebec, Canada
- Graduated from the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in NYC
- Professional actor for over 25 years
- Moved to Los Angeles in 2007
- Starred in Criminal Minds, The Fosters, Jane the Virgin, among others
- Twice nominated for a Canadian Emmy
- Mother of two daughters, ages 6 & 9



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CHRISTINA LOPEZ & THE BOOBELIFE

When Christina Lopez's son Dominic was nearly four months old, she lost her milk supply and retreated to isolation.

"I really wanted to breastfeed," she recalls. "But I was also dealing with severe postpartum depression and other challenges in life. I did not properly communicate how much support and encouragement I needed from those closest to me."

Prior to that, the young new mom had opened an Instagram account, a blog and a Facebook group offering moms a space to receive non-judgmental support about parenting and breastfeeding. She called it: *The Boob.E.Life*.

When Lopez couldn't continue breastfeeding Dominic, her social network, which had gained thousands of followers, went on hiatus.

"I felt like I had betrayed my followers. There was no way I could explain what I was going through," she recalls.

Moms everywhere noticed Lopez wasn't active on her social media accounts and started messaging her and reaching out to see if she was okay.

"I suffered depression after I couldn't breastfeed my son," she remembers. "I wasn't eating right. I really needed to get it together."

Then came the news she was expecting her second child.

At that point, Lopez decided she would start all over with her breastfeeding efforts. She also reignited the mommy support network she had launched. She realized the journey of motherhood went far beyond breastfeeding.

"We're in a new generation of parenting," she says. "If we're more open-minded about things, we can make a big impact."

Lopez nursed her second baby, a girl named Camila, on demand. When Camila was about 7 months old, Dominic, her first-born asked Lopez if he could latch on too, and she gladly let the three-year-old nurse, although he only tried it for a couple of days.

Lopez has partnered with other moms to form a "BoobETribe", which is intended to offer moms a 'safe zone', especially if they're dealing with taboos with the way they're parenting—whether it be because they're going through anxiety, depression, choosing home birth over a hospital delivery; breastfeeding in the open or not nursing at all, or using cannabis as a way relax, Lopez says her goal is to be supportive in an open-minded environment.

Meanwhile the Boob.E.Life Instagram account continues growing and providing motivational messages and quirky uplifting quotes for moms such as "You're the Tits"; and "Posture Makes Perfect". There's also a Meme of Sleeping Beauty that says: "This could be me but I have to nurse."

"At the end of the day, what moms should understand is that whether your breastfeeding or formula feeding, there's so many things going on in the world, we shouldn't be wasting energy on judging. We are more efficient, effective and powerful as moms who come together with an open mind. If you parent differently than I do, but your kids are happy healthy, that's all that matters," says Lopez.

L.A. Kids Who Took to the Streets to 'MARCH FOR OUR LIVES'



PHOTOS BY ROXIE FULLER

“OUR FOUNDING FATHERS HAD NO IDEA WHAT FUTURE GUNS WOULD BE CAPABLE OF”

Raising signs, playing music, chanting loudly and holding their parents' hands, thousands of Los Angeles children took to the streets of Downtown on Saturday, March 24.

They participated in the “March for Our Lives” rally in solidarity with other young men and women across the country who demanded stricter gun control laws following the tragic Feb. 14 shooting at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

The Parkland shooting, perpetrated by 17-year old Nikolas Cruz, claimed the lives of seventeen students and was the latest in a series of mass violence incidents involving semi-automatic weapons at schools across the U.S.

“I was in high school when Columbine happened,” says Roxie Fuller who attended the March for Our Lives in Downtown Los Angeles. “That tragedy horrified and shocked me, I remember feeling just beside myself at the knowledge that you could die at school!... nineteen years later each time there’s a school shooting I’m just as devastated but less and less shocked.”

Fuller who works as an actor and lives in Echo Park says she had a hard time finding her own voice as a teen. She says watching today’s kids discover their own voice and strength through this difficult time set her heart on fire.

“I wanted to support them, witness them, encourage them, document the beginning of this

movement,” says Fuller.

Fuller headed to Downtown on Saturday with her camera and captured the embodied spirit of an unprecedented youth movement.

“I think the NRA is misguided and our founding fathers had no idea what future guns would be capable of when they wrote the 2nd amendment,” she says.

During Saturday’s rally, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti led the crowd in a thunderous chant in front of LA City Hall.

“Whose streets?” he asked.

The children loudly responded: “Our Streets!”.

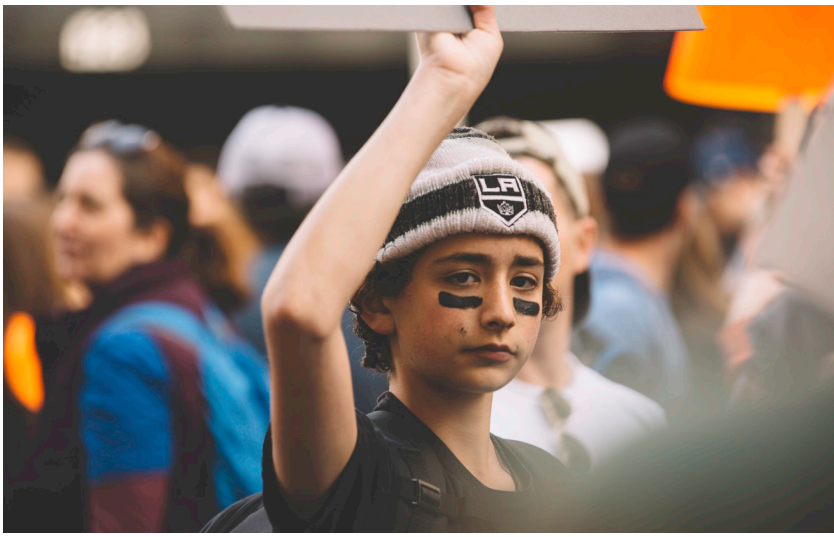
Then he asked: “Whose Lives?”

And the crowd roared: “Our lives!”

“Whose nation?” asked Garcetti.

“Our nation!” replied thousands of marchers.

In his speech, Garcetti reminded the crowd about California’s



tightened gun laws, including the state's restriction on assault rifles, bump stocks and the required waiting period for gun purchases.

The Mayor then continued with a call for action from President Donald Trump:

“Get with the program Mr. President, or get the hell out of the way!”

Erika Villareal, a mom of two children, ages 10 and 14 traveled to Downtown from North Hills on Saturday. She said they kept asking to go and march alongside their peers.

“They usually don't talk about news and current events,” she said. “But when it came to the Parkland shootings, they were mad. They wanted to be here.”



“Get with the program Mr. President, or get the hell out of the way!”

-L.A. MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI

Five Magical LA UNICORN DESSERTS



A craving is born– Hello, tasty Unicorn!

Let's face it, those mystical woodland creatures known as *unicorns* that don't exist but everybody loves, actually possess a curiously graceful charm. In Los Angeles, plenty of businesses have caught the unicorn bug and currently sell sweet and indulgent unicorn concoctions, pastries and other desserts with sprinkles, frosting, rainbow candy and the ever-present magical horn.

Unicorn Macarons - Kayla's Cakes

Downtown Disney District, Anaheim

The tiny french-inspired desserts come in unicorn shape for all who walk through the Downtown Disney District in Anaheim. **Kayla's Cakes** has a dessert cart located across the Lego Store. You can get a single unicorn macaron for \$4 or place an order online for all your friends to enjoy too. The best part? The strawberry filling. The not-so-good part? Those perfectly hand-drawn unicorn lashes will disappear almost magically after the first bite.



Uniconchas - La Central Bakery

East Los Angeles

It takes a unique and imaginative spirit like the one of Laura Martinez to sprinkle her family's landmark **East LA bakery** with a dose of unicorn dust and create such an original concept as her one-of-a-kind *Uniconchas*. Martinez' take on the popular Mexican sweet bread is brilliantly decorated with simple glaze, sugar flowers and a golden horn that is also edible. The only catch– They're almost too cute to eat! Plus, you may get there only to find out they've sold out! Make sure you call ahead of time to ensure your order of *uniconchas* will be available when you arrive. (323) 260-4686.

Unicorn Cupcakes - The Cake Mamas

Monrovia

We know there are dozens of bakers and independent cake-makers that can create custom-ordered unicorn desserts for parties and celebrations. But we love the **Cake Mamas** unicorn cupcakes because these colorful and rainbow-inspired unicorn happy treats are available any time, year-round at their storefront in Monrovia. When you bite into one, you will discover the inside inspires as much joy as the outside with a swirl of bright vanilla flavored cake colors. Best of all, the Cake Mamas are nationally recognized bakers who won the Food Network's, "Cake Wars" Competition during season one. In other words, they know how to please a demanding sweet tooth.



Unicorn Smoothie - Caked LA

Monterey Park

Aside from the marshmallows, sour rainbow belts, peach rings, candy bracelets, sprinkles and whipped cream, **Caked LA's** Unicorn Milkshake is a nutrient-filled smoothie made with milk, fresh strawberries and bananas. It's pretty much the type of liquid power-up you can have for breakfast, lunch or dinner and it automatically comes with dessert and the cutest, most delicious pair of unicorn ears. Oh, and for your unicorn-loving dude, there's also a blue option.

Unicorn Donuts - Spudnuts Donuts

Canoga Park

What's better than biting into a soft, sumptuous, vanilla glazed donut after your first sip of morning coffee? Biting into a soft, sumptuous, vanilla glazed unicorn donut, of course! If you happen to be in Canoga Park, make it a point to stop by **Spudnuts**, where a fresh batch of unicorn cake donuts with crunchy sprinkles of assorted shapes and sizes is baked every morning. Yes, you heard right, these delicious cake donuts do not require a special order, just make sure to get there early. According to a store employee, it's one of their most popular selections.



Lucia Rios

Twisted for Sugar

PHOTOGRAPHY: RACHEL CARRILLO

The first time Lucia Rios introduced Twisted, her gourmet cotton candy business to a large crowd, she was at a women's conference with her mom. It was March 2017 and the line to order one of her signature Latin-inspired cotton candy flavors was long with conference attendees returning for second servings.

"When we drove home that night, I looked at my mom and asked her, 'what just happened!?',” she recalls.



In late 2016, Rios started experimenting with flavored sugars in her Whittier apartment kitchen. She had researched cotton candy production, purchased a cotton candy machine and invested \$600 in a variety of sugar flavors.

But Rios says each of the flavors that arrived with her order tasted awful.

“They were so nasty! I was super bummed out, super upset,” she says.

Disappointed by the idea that her investment had failed, she decided to use the sugars anyway and practice making the popular fluffy sugar clouds.

One evening, as she spun a watermelon flavored bundle, a few friends stopped by to visit and suggested she add *Tajín*, a Mexican seasoning mix made of chili peppers, lime and salt.

BEFORE THE FUN WORLD OF COTTON CANDY

Adding the *Tajín* to the wispy watermelon cotton candy gave the unpopular flavor a unique twist, one that was reminiscent of watermelon fruit bowls sold by street vendors in many of L.A.’s Hispanic communities.

“It tasted good!” remembers Rios. “I got really excited and I took my composition book where I wrote my business plan and started writing down other ideas to replicate flavors that reminded me of things I loved growing up, like birthday parties, Downtown L.A. and *aguas* (fresh fruit beverages).”

She created her dream menu and began developing her own flavors from scratch, many of which incorporate traditional Latin flavors like

Churro, *Dulce de Leche*, Mango with chili powder and *Horchata*.

Two years later, business is great. Rios currently offers 32 cotton candy flavors and is booked frequently for private parties, corporate events and Pop-ups throughout Southern California. She also began selling her signature cotton candy flavors online. Customers can either order individual Twisted cotton candy containers or place wholesale orders.

“It was meant for me to make that error (spending \$600 on pre-made sugar flavors),” says Rios. “I wasn’t supposed to buy them. I was supposed to make them myself and create something for myself.”



Rios has two children, 7-year old Costello and 2-year old daughter Stevie. After having her kids, Rios and her husband tied the knot. Then he encouraged her to focus on *Twisted*.

But launching the business came after a difficult time for Rios who suffered a severe case of post-partum depression after delivering her daughter. She struggled for months, feeling like her maternal instinct was not kicking in.

“When women have post-partum depression with their first child, they don’t know any different. They don’t have anything to compare it to,” says Rios. “Maybe they feel like that’s normal and that’s why it goes unspoken... They probably think ‘if I say I don’t care about my kid, people are going to think I’m crazy.’”

She had experienced instant love and bonding with her firstborn but the second time around, Rios says she didn’t feel such a connection.

Her return to work from maternity leave made matters worse so she resigned

from her full-time job in an effort to focus on her emotional well-being and bond with her daughter.

Still, Rios wasn’t improving and in a moment of desperation, she packed her bags and was determined to leave the house and allow her husband to raise the kids.

“Walking away was something that I, at that time, thought was the best,” recalls Rios. “I felt like if I remove myself they’ll be sad but they won’t grow up with this constant torment of a mom who is angry and mean and hateful towards them.”

That day marked a new beginning for Rios. When her husband arrived and found her packed bags, he talked her out of leaving and encouraged her to seek help.

Rios started going to therapy and started finding ways to heal through positive intentions. She became mindful of the hormonal imbalance that’s prevalent after women have children and through her recovery, she felt bet-

ter. Slowly she started leaving behind the negative feelings and focusing on her love for her kids.

Then she got inspired to start her own business.

In thinking of a business venture, she figured cotton candy would prove successful since it’s a sweet treat loved by all. And when it came to a business name, she felt *Twisted* was perfect. Not only would it describe her twist to classic cotton candy flavors, it also described her own personality.

“I feel like I’m a little twisted— I’m girly but I’m edgy. I like Selena but I also like Nirvana. I feel like I’m a little bit of everything!” says Rios. “I like simple things...but with a twist.”

Twisted has grown from a kitchen apartment experiment to a big workspace, plus, Rios says her business has helped her become more spiritual.

“I’ve become more in tune with myself,” she assures.

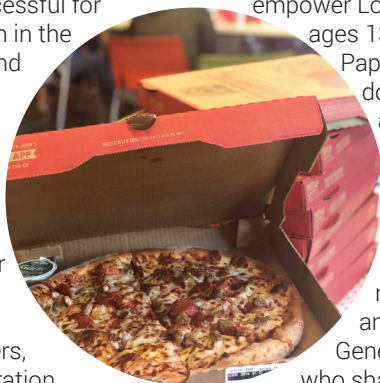
Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine Had the Chance to #PassThePizza



Papa John's & Generation Her

Last year, Papa John's Pizza introduced a campaign that gave people an opportunity to #PassThePizza, or nominate a deserving individual, family or charity— to receive free pizza based on their good deeds.

The campaign proved successful for the third largest pizza chain in the nation with many people and charities that felt rewarded with complimentary pizza. In May, Papa John's reached out to Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine inviting us to #Pass-ThePizza to a charity of our choice. Given our appreciation for groups that support mothers, we chose L.A.-based Generation Her, a nonprofit organization that helps



empower Los Angeles teen moms, ages 13-23.

Papa John's delivered over a dozen pizzas to the moms and children that attended Generation Her which were enjoyed by the moms and their children, during a meeting break. We also had the opportunity to talk with the founder and executive director of GenerationHer, Dianna Smiley, who shared information about the charity she founded in 2009.



DIANNA SMILEY

Founder, Executive Director,
Generation Her

- We offer a weekly life skills program for teen mothers and pregnant teens at our 6 locations throughout Los Angeles and Orange County.
- Generation Her encourages setting educational and career goals for each teen mom that we work with and walks beside her to accomplish her goals and provide a safe place of encouragement, hope and support through mentors and their fellow community of teenage mothers.
- Generation Her encourages independence through teaching life skill classes such as; budgeting, money management, job interviewing skills, resume building, cooking, self-defense, nutrition, stress and anger management and relationship workshops.
- Generation Her is not only changing lives in the world of teen moms, it is also changing the community. The impact of a girl who will not stay on welfare throughout her lifetime and who is going to give herself and her child a brighter future leads to a better economy and society.
- For more information and to make a donation to Generation Her, visit: www.GenerationHer.org

Bristol Farms

BACK TO SCHOOL

SNACKS • LUNCH BAGS
BACKPACKS • WATER CANTEENS



#BFBACKTOSCHOOL





Bricia Lopez

The Guelaguetza Girl

Photos by Rachel Carrillo

“Growing up in Mexico was very important for me,”



When Bricia Lopez gets into a discussion about “mom guilt”— a term used to describe the remorse mothers experience when trying to balance children, career and household responsibilities— her voice takes on a different tone.

Sitting in the back of her family’s nationally-acclaimed La Guelaguetza Restaurant in Koreatown, Lopez watches over her 2-year-old son Eddie, who is having a typical fun-filled afternoon that involves running down to the restaurant’s main dining hall, removing his sandals and climbing chairs at different tables.

“I think when you’re a mom you feel guilt in so many different ways,” says Lopez. “But one of the things I felt the most was, ‘how could I *not* have been there for my sister!’”

Lopez and her older sister Paulina host a successful podcast titled the *Super Mamás Podcast*, which has brought them fame with listeners from as far as Afghanistan and Australia. Their fans relate to their talks about motherhood and raising kids in Los Angeles.

But prior to launching the podcast, before Lopez became a mom, she was frequently absent from Paulina’s home during a time when Paulina needed extra support raising a newborn and a toddler.

“Why did I have to be there to help? It was *her* decision to have kids,” Lopez would think to herself.

But when Lopez delivered her son Eddie, she was overcome by emotions including a sense of culpability that was attached to her lack of involvement in her sister’s earlier motherhood journey.

“I couldn’t believe how selfish I was. I couldn’t believe that she had gone through this *twice*, by herself!” she recalls. “She felt alone.”

When Lopez approached Paulina about her guilt and apologized for having been distant, Paulina reacted with a harmonious and ingenious response: “What you and I have is special...maybe we should share it!”

The Emergence of Super Mamás

While customers at La Guelaguetza order their favorite entrees, which mainly consist of dishes from Mexico’s southern state of Oaxaca where Lopez was born, she sits in her back office. The popular restaurant that once belonged to her parents, was acquired by Lopez and her three siblings five years ago. Lopez is in charge of the venue’s larger-scale operations, like marketing, sales and events.

In 2015, Lopez decided to support her sister’s aspiration to have a podcast where they could both discuss the many nuances of motherhood.

“I was like, ‘I’m gonna make this happen for her and we’re going to do it,’” says Lopez. “I feel like I *owed it* to my sister.”

Lopez went online and researched everything necessary to create a podcast.

Space wasn’t a problem. They used a small area of the restaurant to create a recording studio. Equipment wasn’t hard to obtain, they invested some of their business income to purchase what they needed. Editing and streaming wasn’t hard, Lopez had spent countless hours researching and learning online. When all the elements were in place, they set off to produce their first show.

What Lopez achieved was a sense of closure from the days she hadn’t spent enough time with Paulina. Together, they learned that mothers near and far were relating to their experiences.

“Everyone needs to be encouraged to go on their journey. “The more empowered people feel, the better off everyone is,” says Lopez.

Two years later, the Super Mamás Podcast has proven to be a major success for the Lopez sisters. So much that major corporations like McDonald’s, Target and Macy’s have partnered with them for social media campaigns and engagements.



On Motherhood and Culture

Lopez started working at La Guelaguetza Restaurant when she was fifteen. Before that, she had been immersed in her dad's Mezcal business in Oaxaca.

"I started working with my dad since I was five," she says. "I grew up not even thinking about it. It was what we did."

In 1994, the family moved to Los Angeles when Lopez was nine years old. She didn't speak English at the time.

"Growing up in Mexico was very important for me," says Lopez.

When it comes to raising her son with the same type of cultural connection, Lopez isn't worried. "You can learn a second language but the most important thing for me is learning about another person's culture."

She makes yearly trips to Mexico with her son and plans on giving him an organic way to fall in love with her birthplace.


"I don't give myself that much pressure. I don't stress about it," she says. "I think at some point in his life, he will live in Mexico. That's when he'll be immersed with the language and lifestyle."

Plus, the 2-year-old boy is already familiar with unique aspects of Oaxacan culture. The restaurant features a store with Oaxacan made goods. There is artwork representative of Oaxaca and many of the dishes he's been enjoying since he was introduced to solid foods are specifically from the region where Lopez spent her early childhood. Those include the likes of fried grasshoppers and the famous chicken dish with a special dark brown sauce called *mole*, for which La Guelaguetza has received awards and praise from tough food critics.

As Lopez walks from one end of the restaurant to another, her son follows her and smiles with a type of contentment that comes from having a place in his mom's environment.

"At the end of the day, no matter what your cultural or socioeconomic background is, everything that we do is for our kids," says Lopez. "We love our children so much."





PAULINA LOPEZ A SUPER MAMA

Photos by Rachel Carrillo | Hair by On Location Glam

For many women, having their first child presents life's greatest challenge. For Paulina Lopez, the greatest challenge wasn't having her first child, a cheerful girl named Krista who is now six-years-old. Nor was it the arrival of her second daughter, a curious and playful little girl named Sabina. As Lopez tells it, her greatest personal battle to date, was adjusting to life after the arrival of her third daughter, Zixta.

“AFTER EVERYBODY LEFT, AFTER I WAS LEFT BY MYSELF, THAT’S WHEN A PART OF ME CHANGED”



“It’s been really hard emotionally,” says Lopez. “I don’t know know why. I don’t know what happened. I thought this was going to be a piece of cake, I already have two kids.”

On September 27, Lopez delivered Zixta in a setting many women could only dream of— peacefully, at home, surrounded by loved ones, with the help of a caring doula and facing a beautiful sunset. The delivery itself was perfect, says Lopez.

But what happened afterwards, once she found herself home alone with a newborn, a toddler and a kindergartener, is still something she’s trying to figure out.

“After everybody left, after I was left by myself, that’s when a part of me changed,” says Lopez.

Sitting in her family’s La Guelagueta Restaurant, Lopez signs paychecks, answers questions from numerous employees and orders a few horchata drinks—all while breastfeeding Zixta. She has not officially returned to work, where she manages the day-to-day operations of the acclaimed Oaxacan food restaurant that she owns with her siblings, but a quick stop at the restaurant

proves her leadership is crucial.

Lopez continues battling deep, raw emotions that have taken over her peace of mind and brought her anxiety at times, since the arrival of Zixta.

“It’s been really hard emotionally,” says Lopez. “I don’t know know why. I don’t know what happened. I thought this was going to be a piece of cake, I already have two kids.”

Two years ago, Lopez suggested to her sister Bricia that they create a podcast where moms could come together and relate on topics about raising children and the good and bad experiences attached to that.

The sisters launched the *Super Mamás* podcast, which soon turned into a successful venture with a large following of moms in Los Angeles and beyond. Their on-air influence also caught the attention of companies that started reaching out to the Lopez sisters for partnerships and special events. “My pregnancy went by so fast,” shares Lopez. “I was always so busy!”

Seeking Help

When Lopez slowed down after giving birth to Zixta, a sudden restlessness and fear of missing out on work projects and events started invading her thoughts.

"We live so fast that to me, it felt like I had already lost a year. Like everybody was doing things and I was staying behind. I was shutting down, taking things to the extreme...like self-doubt, feeling self-conscious, blowing things out of proportion," she shares.

Then she attended an advanced screening of Disney Pixar's *Coco*, which was part of a special collaboration with Disney and hosted by her own *Super Mamás* Podcast.

Spending several hours away from Baby Zixta meant she wasn't able to latch the baby when her milk dropped.

"By the time I got home (from the *Coco* Screening), I was in so much pain," she recalls. "I ended up getting Mastitis and got so sick, my mom flew back from Mexico to be with me."

She recalls one night as she laid crying in bed, shivering with a high fever and sweating profusely.

"I think that's when I let go of everything. I needed to hit rock bottom to say *this is enough!* Once I got better, I felt like all that sweating had helped get everything out. I think that's when I was ready to be *me* again."

From that point, Lopez decided to seek help and began seeing a post-partum health expert to aid her in overcoming this stage of her journey.

"I'm working on my recovery," she says.

She has opened up to her *Super Mamás* listeners, often speaking on social media about the good and the not-so-good days as a new mother of three.

The platform that she created to serve as a support system for moms, seems to have come full circle. Dozens of women have written to Lopez offering encouragement and inspiration on each one of her posts.

"I've been here before. I know what I have to do," says Lopez. "I hope by sharing my experience, other women going through the same don't feel shame in their experience and decide to get help."



"My pregnancy went by so fast," shares Lopez. "I was always so busy!"

Boss Mom

Baby Zixta wakes up from a short stroller nap. She recently turned eight weeks old and starts asking for attention through soft cries and an occasional whimper. The baby girl looks tiny, with big observant eyes and a gentle smile.

Lopez picks up her baby girl, consoles her and walks through the restaurant greeting customers and handling staff inquiries.

She's vulnerable yet strong. She's broken but determined. And all along the way, she's proving to herself and her followers that it's okay to be honest about real motherhood feelings.

Paulina Lopez is a Super Mamá.





Harvard Study: Certain Foods may Improve Brain Health

If you are what you eat, then what should you eat (or not eat) to help you retain information?

“Keeping your brain healthy with proper sleep, hydration and exercise, along with eating certain foods that may help with cognition, will set the stage for maximum memory, calm and focus during a busy time,” said Beth Winthrop a national dietitian for Sodexo.

A Harvard Medical School report lists particular foods that may improve brain health and mental function. These same foods protect the heart and blood vessels:

- Green, leafy vegetables that are high in vitamin

K, lutein, folate and beta carotene.

- Fatty fish or other sources of omega-3 fatty acids like avocado, walnuts and flaxseed.
- Tea or coffee in small to moderate amounts—according to the *Journal of Nutrition*, the caffeine in them may help solidify new memories.
- Dark chocolate and berries contain flavonoids, which have been shown to help improve memory
- According to a study published in *Neurology*, the Mediterranean

diet, high in fruits, vegetables, fish, olive oil and whole grains along with moderate amounts of dairy and red wine, has been shown to help with depression and better thinking skills.

Winthrop advises eating a breakfast that includes lean protein and high fiber carbohydrates that allows a steady release of blood glucose. According to the Mayo Clinic, caffeine is safe up to 400 mg per day, which translates to four cups of coffee. Winthrop suggests indulging in moderate amounts of tea and coffee rather than high caffeine energy drinks.

WINES BEST SHARED

Butternut Wine

Led by a trio of wine industry experts, BNA Wine Group, whose roots span from Nashville to Napa, is captivating wine lovers with its Butternut Varietals, made popular for their decadent taste and affordability.



“I love finding a new vineyard, creating a new blend and then taking it to meet new people,” says Tony Leonardini, winemaker & partner at BNA Wine Group.

Butternut’s exceptionally crafted varietals in-

clude Chardonnay, Rosé and Pinot Noir. Most recently, the company launched their popular varietals in cans, making it easier to enjoy the brand’s unique vision on-the-go.

Butternut wine, including the new Butternut cans can be purchased at Albertson’s, BevMo, Costco, Vons, Whole Foods and World Market.



Here’s what to expect from each varietal:

Chardonnay

Aromas of peach, hazelnut and spiced candied apple breeze around the brim. Round, creamy notes of fig, butterscotch and sweet oak dance on the palate. Perfect for pairing and sharing!

Rosé

Sweet scents of watermelon, citrus and pale florals fill the air. On the palate, an array of strawberry and grapefruit entwined to deliver a crisp, acidic finish.

Pinot Noir

Aromas of vanilla, cassis and menthol lift from the glass. On the palate, an array of red and dark berries meets a medium-bodied, silky finish.

Butternut Wine is a testament to a simple formula that “coaxes the best wine into every bottle” allowing enthusiasts to enjoy great wine that is comfortable and relaxed, with a touch of glam. Butternut is perfect for Los Angeles Moms who deserve a wine worth sharing.

#WinesBestShared

Visit www.bnawinegroup.com

Kerstin Kühn



Photo by SAMANTHA JACOBY

Tantalizing Tiny Taste Buds

Inside an industrial kitchen in Downtown Los Angeles, Kerstin Kühn and her assistant have just finished blending fresh peaches, pears and organic vanilla. The blend looks like a tasty and creamy bright-colored smoothie.

“We poach the pears and the apples a little bit, just to get them nice and soft before pureeing,” explains Kühn.

She then scoops the mixture carefully into individually labeled cups and weighs each one. She seals the cups, arranges them on a tray and places the tray inside a walk-in freezer where rows of other small food containers will be stored for a few days before they’re delivered to clients around Los Angeles County.

“It’s not easy running a business,” says Kühn. “But moms email me and say: ‘thank you so much...my baby is such a great eater.’”

Kühn is the owner of Little Foodie Club, a Los Angeles-based baby food delivery service that aims to train a baby’s palate by introducing early foods made with a unique combination of flavors.

Parents who purchase a Little Foodie Club subscription can expect a monthly delivery with small batches of handmade purées made from organic, local, preservative-free ingredients. Little Foodie Club flavors include Lentils with Rainbow Carrots & Thyme; Brown Rice with Zucchini; Peas & Mint; Broccoli & Apple with Quinoa; Baby Beef Casserole and Lamb with Potatoes, Spinach & Rosemary, among others. “We’re always trying to improve things,” says Kühn.

Before Little Foodie Club



Kühn moved to Los Angeles from Europe in 2013 when her husband accepted a job relocation.

Prior to moving, she had spent a decade in London working as a food journalist often traveling around the world tasting innovative cuisine and interviewing world-acclaimed chefs.

When she moved here, Kühn continued working as a freelancer writer. The British publications she had worked for wanted content about the Los Angeles food scene and Kühn was happy to provide it.

“The thing that blew me away, the most was the quality of the fresh produce,” says Kühn describing her early culinary experience in LA. “Here...everything tasted sweeter and more flavorful and fresher. That was a real revelation which then inspired me to cook a lot more again.”

Motherhood and the Launch of a Brand

A year after arriving in LA, Kühn and her husband had a baby girl named Maxine.

When it was time to begin introducing Maxine to solid foods, Kühn realized rice cereal wouldn't necessarily give her daughter the nutrients she felt were appropriate for a baby. “From a nutritional point of view (rice cereal) is fortified with iron, which is important for babies from six months... but apart from that, it's a refined starch... it's basically just empty carbs,” she explains.



like avocados and bananas— Kühn would simply try again until the baby allowed her tiny taste buds to accept the flavors. Kühn learned palate-training was possible for babies.

Then she started sharing her homemade baby purées with fellow mom friends who were also introducing solids to their babies but felt unsure about what to feed

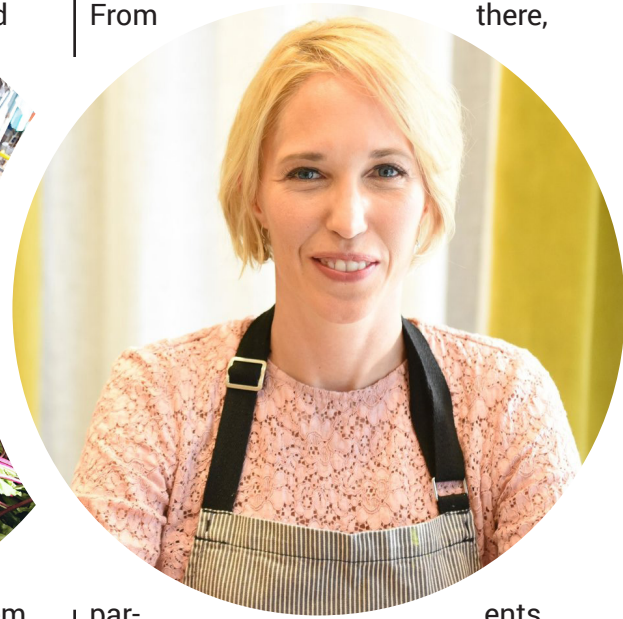


them. “I thought, ‘let me give them some of the foods that I make’ and their kids loved the foods! That’s when I came up with the idea of Little Foodie Club,” she says. Together with her husband, Kühn developed a business plan, made a personal investment and launched the company. Almost instantly, families approved of the brand. Moms were happy to give their kids healthy, nutritious meals without the hassle of having to prepare them.

Today, Little Foodie Club continues growing its clientele base. While her husband takes care of the company’s marketing, design and financials, Kühn does all the shopping and cooking. She shops at local farmers markets making sure

all ingredients are locally grown and organic. Then she heads to her cooking space, an industrial kitchen she leases adjacent to the LA Arts District and prepares the baby recipes before they’re frozen and shipped.

Most recently, she developed a “21 days to solids” pack, which gives parents an opportunity to introduce a different food every day to their baby, for 21 days. From there,



parents can move to the meal plan for 6-9-month-olds that features 12 different purees, with menus changing seasonally. Kühn’s concept has already gained national attention and parents around the country have inquired about subscribing to Little Foodie Club. She’s working on ways to ship her products to families outside of Southern California in a way that’s cost-efficient. “It was not easy to get this brand off the ground,” says Kühn. “But I’m very passionate about it.”

Using her food knowledge and research on ingredients suitable for healthy digestion in young babies, Kühn began experimenting in the kitchen with fruits, vegetables and certain light spices. The result was a variety of flavorful purées that Maxine started eating without hesitation. When there was a flavor combination that Maxine wasn’t approving,

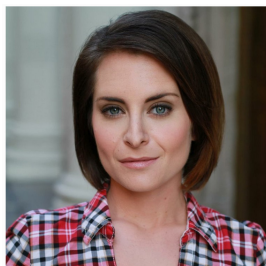
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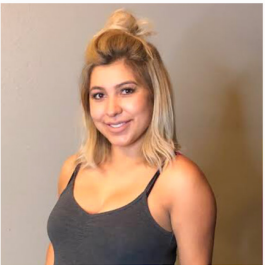
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Diamond Mom Jessica Mendoza

"In my job, my kids don't notice, 'oh she's a woman, next to a lot of men doing a man's job'. They just see mom doing what mom does. I want them to grow up knowing anyone can do anything."

Jessica Mendoza is no stranger to a ball park.

She is a lifelong softball star, to say the least.

After stellar high school and collegiate careers, Mendoza went on to represent her country on the world's biggest stage.

The two-time Olympian brought home gold and silver medals, leading team USA on the field in Athens and Beijing.

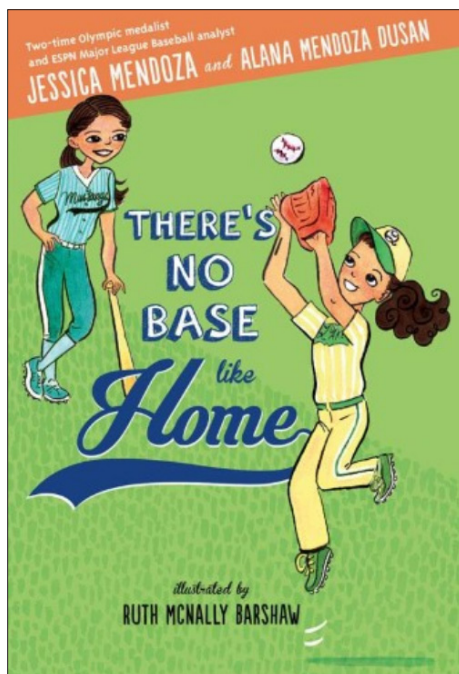
Now Mendoza travels around the country as the first female Major League Baseball analyst and the only female on ESPN's *Sunday Night Baseball* broadcast alongside Alex Rodriguez and Matt Vasgersian.

She's also an [author](#) and a mom of two active boys, Caleb and Caden, to whom she dedicates quality time, both discovering museums at cities across the country on weekends during baseball season and homeschooling them part-time on weekdays.

Most recently, she teamed up with her sister Alana and co-authored [There's No Base Like Home](#), a funny middle-grade novel that celebrates teamwork, family, and softball.

Her ability to balance career projects and motherhood comes from her love of tackling the impossible and landing winning results—Mendoza loves challenges.

"If it's something that's going to better me and my family and I know is going to be hard—then I'm really excited about it," she says. "If it's a challenge,



I want to do it. I would be bored if there wasn't something that made me nervous."

While chatting on a terrace overlooking Los Angeles, Mendoza opened up about baseball and being a *boy mom*. She is light-hearted and easy to share

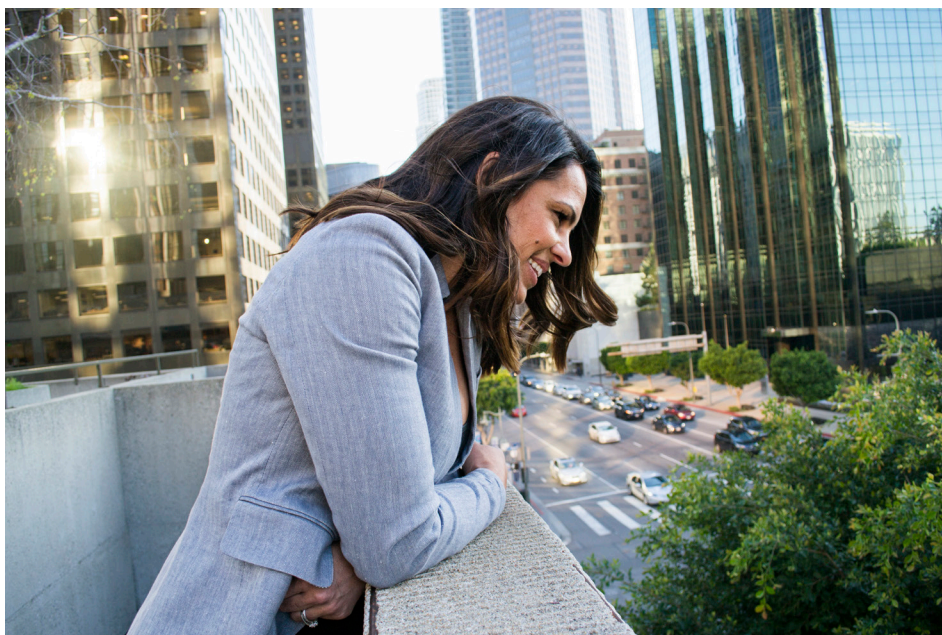
a laugh with, often referencing funny stories about her kids and their careful eye for their mom's Olympic gold medal when other kids want to hold it at school.


To Mendoza, raising her boys with a sense of appreciation towards all people, has been a priority.

"When we have conversations, it's so important that they learn to love everybody equally," she says.

And she'll *go the distance* if it means not missing out on special occasions, like in 2016, when she used her travel day between Cleveland and Chicago to spend Halloween with her kids.

"I flew home, did the costumes, trick-or-treated with the kids, then took a Redeye back so I could be at work at 7 am the next day (in Chicago). It was insane," she shares with a laugh. "As much as I was exhausted, I was refreshed because I got to see my boys. Halloween at that age made them so excited that mom was going to be with them!"

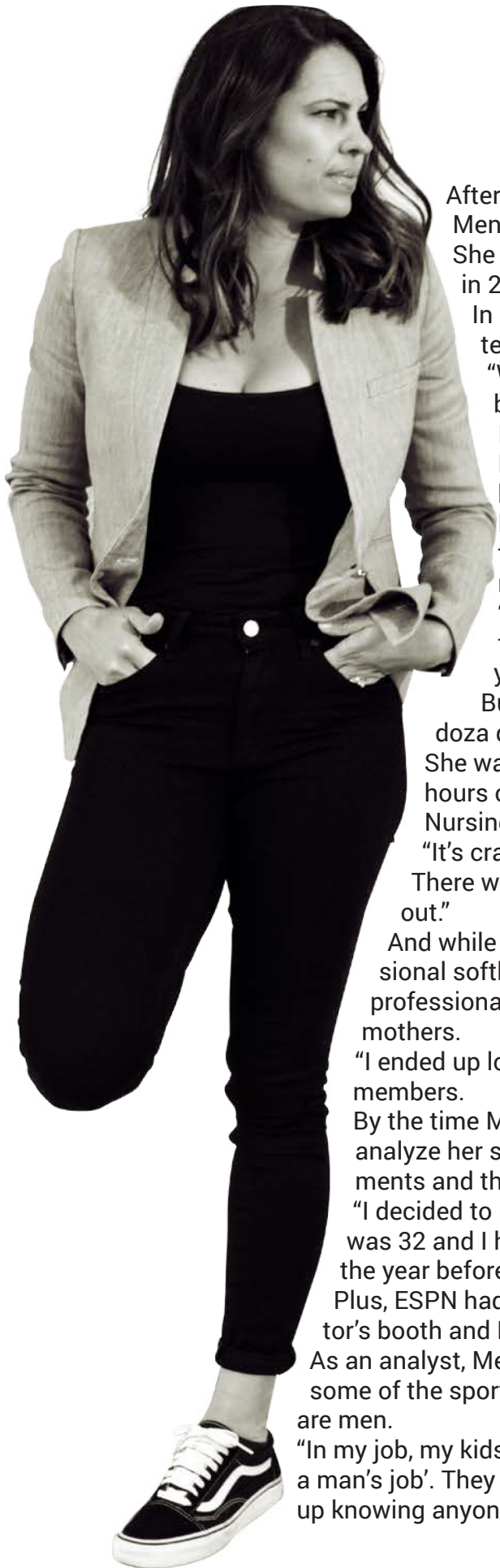


A woman with long dark hair is sitting on a lush green lawn. She is wearing a light grey blazer over a black top and black pants, paired with black and white sneakers. She is smiling broadly at the camera. The background is a vast, well-maintained green field.

**"I realized you can
have a child, play a
professional sport...
and still make it
work."**

-Jessica Mendoza

ON BEING A NEW MOM & A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE



After coming home from Beijing with an Olympic silver medal, Mendoza and her husband started family planning. She took the following summer off and delivered her son Caleb in 2009.

In 2010, she joined the USSSA Pride, a professional softball team based in Florida.

“We traveled all over the world,” recalls Mendoza. “My husband quit his job at that point, so he could travel with me. I look back and it was some the best memories of my life. Me and my husband and this newborn little boy that didn’t know the difference.”

Her baby would sometimes be in the dugout with his “eighteen aunts,” Mendoza shares alluding to her fellow teammates. Those memories make Mendoza happy.

“I realized you *can* have a child, play a professional sport— that doesn’t pay a ton of money but you’re doing it ‘cause you love it— and still make it work.”

But not all aspects of being a new mom came easy for Mendoza during that time.

She was breastfeeding her baby and would often spend eight hours on the field with no dedicated space to pump or store milk. Nursing was also posing additional challenges to her game.

“It’s crazy how much it affects you playing...how much it hurts.

There were times where I couldn’t dive because I had to get the milk out.”

And while Mendoza handled the demands of motherhood and professional softball seamlessly, she has questioned whether the world of professional sports should be more considerate of the needs of nursing mothers.

“I ended up losing my milk... It was something I regretted later,” she remembers.

By the time Mendoza was expecting her second child, she took time to analyze her softball career. She considered her age, her accomplishments and the travel and time spent away from home with her first-born.

“I decided to retire,” she shares. “I was blessed because at this point, I was 32 and I had played in two Olympics and we’d won the championship the year before.”

Plus, ESPN had been looking for a unique voice to place in the commentator’s booth and Mendoza was an ideal candidate.

As an analyst, Mendoza feels at home. She jumps right into the mix with some of the sports network’s most respected commentators, most of whom are men.

“In my job, my kids don’t notice, ‘oh she’s a woman, next to a lot of men doing a man’s job’. They just see mom doing what mom does. I want them to grow up knowing anyone can do anything.”

LA. Mommy Workouts

With Annette Uribe



Baby and Me Dancinerate

A 45-minute class designed to rebuild strength and stamina while having fun interacting with your little one.

My son and I had a blast on the dance floor with Ilyse Baker who's the founder of Baby and Me Dancinerate, at Moore Dancing Studio in Brentwood.

Moore Dancing Studio is owned by Tiffany Moore who also joined the class with her infant daughter.

The idea of Baby and Me Dancinerate stemmed from Ilyse and Tiffany's love of dance. As new moms, they wanted to continue dancing, while working out and spending time with their daughters.

Dancing and carrying around an extra 10-20 lbs. of baby weight definitely accounts for a good sweat!

Website: www.ilysebaker.com



The Bar Method Downtown LA

A little gem of a fitness studio offering barre classes for students of all athletic levels and ages. The signature method uses your own body weight, the ballet barre and dumbbells to create a great workout!

I had never experienced this type of workout and I was a little skeptical because somewhere in my mind, I thought it was intended for ballerinas.

The Bar Method DTLA is definitely not a ballet class.

The session started with a warm-up, followed by upper-body exercises and push-ups, then a sequence of leg and seat work at the barre and core exercises on the floor. My quads and abs were on fire and it felt great!

Momma, don't let your belly stop you from your workouts!

Website: www.barmethod.com



The Body Los Angeles

The class I attended was joined by women from all fitness levels and several were pregnant. We warmed up by stretching and targeting problem areas as identified by the expectant mummies. Shortly after that, we went into a 12-minute circuit workout that consisted of push-ups, lunges, push presses and leg raises with arm curls. Then we moved on to core and glute-activated workout movements. We finished off with deep stretches to help the lower back, where many women experience discomfort during pregnancy.

All the ladies did great, especially the mummies-to-be. They gave it their best effort and enjoyed themselves. It was encouraging to see the ladies motivating one another to finish!

www.thebodylosangeles.com



For more on Annette, visit www.HealthyVidaforMom.com

Living a balanced life is possible

In 2010, my mother passed away within three months of being diagnosed with stage 4 Pancreatic Cancer. Her illness and death were extremely unexpected and took us all by surprise. Losing my mom to cancer was what kick started my fitness and health journey. I knew I had to change my eating and fitness habits to stay healthy.

Growing up, I was a hefty little girl. Adolescence kicked in but the pounds never seemed to shed. I never paid attention to what I ate, nor did I think it really mattered.

Then, I met my husband, an active and fit guy, who forever changed my life. He is my rock, my best friend, and my number one cheerleader. In 2011, three months before the L.A. Marathon, my husband, who was my boyfriend at the time, planned a last-minute trip with his friends and wouldn't be able to run his 11th marathon. Instead, he asked me if I wanted to run with his bib number and avoid letting it go to waste. Thinking little of it and trying to impress him, I

accepted. Then I realized 26.2 miles was a long way! I had less than three months to "train." I finished the marathon in 4 hours and 45 minutes. The feeling I had at the finish line was unexplainable, I was on a natural high from the adrenaline. I could not believe what my body had just gone through and what it was capable of. From that day on I was hooked!

In my journey with health and fitness I have lost a total of 60 lbs. I have stayed committed to better eating habits and being active.

Today I'm a Pre & Postnatal Wellness Coach. I help other moms and moms-to-be learn healthy lifestyle choices by working with them to achieve their fitness and nutrition goals before, during, and after pregnancy.

Motherhood is a blessing and every woman should enjoy and embrace it.

Stay Healthy,
-ANNETTE URIBE

ALYSON IWAMOTO on MOTHERHOOD, CLAY AND L.A.



At one point during her visit, Iwamoto's great aunt walked her to ancestral grounds that had witnessed seven generations of members of the Togawa family— her maternal predecessors, work the land as farmers and develop a series of skills and talents along the way. Iwamoto waited to be left alone. Then she took a moment to do something that would placate the doubts she was feeling about her chosen career as a ceramicist— she removed her shoes and stepped on the ground, barefoot. “Historically (my ancestors) worked with the earth. And clay comes from the earth,” says Iwamoto. “When I took off my shoes and

stood on the earth, I was just like, ‘I’m home’ I’ve never been here *but I’m home.*”

Iwamoto is a clay artist. She’s also a full-time mom, designer and owner of Alyson Iwamoto Ceramics.

“I was born an artist and it took some time to say ‘yes’ to this aspect.”

— Alyson Iwamoto

She runs a delicate and successful operation with her fingertips that produces dainty jewelry, porcelain origami, whimsical animal figures sculpted out of clay and a charming form of art called *wabi sabi* that involves asymmetry, simplicity and her inspiration from both the California desert and her grandmother’s teacups.

Her young daughter Aiko is often strapped to her back with a child carrier while she works in her home studio.

“Everything I do is possible through and because of love,” says Iwamoto. “It’s how I describe being a ceramicist ...it’s who I am, it’s more than just a choice.”

But Iwamoto hadn’t always felt this comfortable about her talent.

Sitting inside the library at the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona, where some of her work is on display, Iwamoto explained why it took her some time to *come out* as an artist.

“I thought it was frivolous,” she says. “I was born an artist and it took some time to say ‘yes’ to this aspect.”

A few years ago, Alyson Iwamoto made her first trip to her grandparents’ native country of Japan.

THE CERAMICS TEACHER



Before getting married and becoming a mom, Iwamoto had joined the staff at Inner City Arts, an educational institution in the heart of Skid Row focused on teaching expression through the arts. Her involvement teaching kids about pottery and ceramics gave her an opportunity to feel validated as an artist.

Among her many memories bonding and helping children find a voice through art and imagination, she recalls a time when a young girl molded a small house out of clay during class. Iwamoto thought the house looked like one from a classic children's book.

But by the time Iwamoto came around to discuss the house design with the girl, the young student had destroyed her creation by cutting the house in half with her fingers.

The girl told Iwamoto she was making 'a broken home'. "I said, 'oh, ok. What else can you make?' There was no wrong or right," recalls Iwamoto. "So then she started working some more and created a forest!"

The attachment Iwamoto felt toward her students was such that before realizing it, the line between her personal life and her work life had started to blur. She was very emotionally invested and didn't know how to take a break. Although she was trying to fight it, Iwamoto says her mind knew it was time for a change.

"It's such an important thing to bring some light and positivity to these lives, and equally they brought it to me" she says. "Inner-City Arts is a deep part of my connection to L.A."

*"I was born an artist and it took some time to say 'yes' to this aspect."
— Alyson Iwamoto*

ON MOTHERHOOD



After having dedicated what she describes as *one-fourth of her life* to Inner-City Arts, Iwamoto resigned. Her husband Harry encouraged her to focus on her own creative artistry once again.

"For years I had told the kids to follow their dreams and trust their imagination and now it was my time to do the same," recalls Iwamoto.

She began redefining herself as a ceramicist and eventually, she and her husband welcomed their daughter Aiko, who is 18-months old.

On any given day, when Iwamoto joins a local marketplace or artist's fair and sets up a table to sell her creations, little Aiko (whose name means *Love Child* in Japanese), can be seen unpacking Iwamoto's ceramic necklaces, or smiling at customers and modeling her mom's pieces.

Iwamoto will hold her daughter and both will laugh together.

"She's the happiest baby," says Iwamoto who credits Aiko as a source of inspiration for her line of ornate animal figurines. "Last week Aiko picked up each critter sculpture I made and kissed them all on the head. I felt that was the biggest compliment she could have given me. Art isn't frivolous. It's self-expression."

LINDA GARCIA

Creatress in Flow

The light in Downtown LA's Arts District is bright and soothing on a recent summer afternoon. Luz Warrior is sitting at a table outside of Urth Café and has engaged in a thought-provoking conversation about water molecules based on the experiments of Japanese researcher Masaru Emoto. "We're all made of up mostly water," explains Luz. "In the same way that we are able to pray for water and change the way it materializes, if your brain is feeling gratitude, you can send that energy and make a manifestation happen." Her passion for creating consciousness based on the power of intention, is palpable. And as she tells it, every major highlight in her life has been a vision, actualized.

"I really feel I need to be a communicator of sorts," she says.

Luz Warrior (born Linda Garcia) has thrived in the limelight, starring in theater productions and working in film projects with well-known celebrities. But the Los Angeles mother of a young adult girl and a toddler boy has never openly sought the popularity she has garnered over the years.

In 2016, when she was expecting her son Benicio, Luz posted a YouTube video sharing the items she intended to carry in her hospital bag in anticipation of her baby boy's arrival. To date, the video has resulted in over 35,000 views and continues to receive praise from viewers worldwide with comments such as: "I honestly am so thankful for women like you!"

Ana Rosales, who's among Luz's nearly 12,000 Instagram followers met her at an event last year. "She's Amazing," Rosales told Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine. "She certainly didn't know who I was but...she made me feel like I knew her for years. In a way, I felt like her energy was pulling me toward her."

And Rosales is not alone in her admiration of Luz, as witnessed by her growing social media accounts. With every picture Luz shares, she receives countless impressions and lengthy accolades and comments.

Take for example, a photo she posted from her days as a teenager when she admittedly bullied and physically attacked girls and guys in over two dozen fights.

"I always wonder how someone so violent can work towards being the opposite of that," expressed Luz in the photo's caption. "Then I remember all the people that helped rehabilitate me."

The outpouring of support from her followers made it clear they appreciate her honesty and support her decision to open up about darker moments in her past.

More curious, perhaps, is the fact that before her days of fights and offensive behavior, Luz, herself, had long suffered as a victim of bullying.

LET
THERE
BE
LUZ

Photos by Rachel Carrillo



A Little Luz

During her elementary school years, Luz lived in San Juan Capistrano, where she was constantly bullied and beat up by her peers. The young Mexican-American girl with a pretty face and a keen eye for fashion couldn't understand why other girls her age acted so violently toward her.

"I could feel myself closing in," recalls Luz. "I would sit by myself. I was very isolated, a loner... really sad."

In junior high, she was denied an opportunity to try out for a role in a Shakespeare play, which further shattered her spirit. Thinking about this moment makes Luz get emotional.

"I would sneak in to the theater and watch the girls perform. They were running lines, they were practicing. I was enchanted by it," she remembers, with tears rolling down her eyes. "But I was still happy to be a part of it, that energy was still circulating."

Luz attended the play's opening night and remembers telling herself she would one day be a part of that experience.

A Teen Mom

Shortly after that event, things in Southern California were not going very well for Luz. She was beginning to rebel against her mom and the decision was made for her to relocate to Dallas with her father who didn't dedicate the time to closely monitor her whereabouts.

With a clean slate, a new sense of freedom and nobody to recognize her as the young girl from California who had consistently suffered through hostility and violence at school, Luz took on the biggest role of her life in Dallas. She turned the tables and for the first time in her life, she became the aggressor.

"I had so much hate and resentment built up, that I would go bonkers on girls," recalls Luz. "I was just ready to destroy whatever I could destroy." Her reputation in Texas soon became that of an indomitable gangster girl, where school kids would rally around her just to watch her physically assault the next contender.

Then at fourteen-years-old, Luz Warrior became pregnant.

"I understood I couldn't fight anymore," says Luz. "Instead of being a good fighter, I had to think of how to become a good person."

The truth was, Luz knew she had to heal from the harm she had caused herself and others. Somewhere in her new role as a young mom, she began directing her energy toward finding peace again. Part of that peace, came from revisiting her desire to perform for an audience.

Luz recalls living in an apartment where she and her daughter Elizabeth shared a walk-in closet decorated with Hollywood-type dressing room lights and portraits of her favorite actors, a sanctuary of sorts. Luz would sit inside that closet and pretend she was getting ready to be in a play or a movie. She would do so by holding up a red lipstick in a silver tube labeled "Drama" and imagine her life at the center of a performance theater. She believed it.

"I would always say, I'm an actress and Dallas is my stage," she remembers.



“If your brain is feeling gratitude, you can send that energy and make a manifestation happen”

A Starring Role

In 2009, having returned to Southern California, Luz’s name once again took the spotlight. This time, her moment had arrived. With no prior acting experience, she was cast as the starring role in a theater production about the life of Puerto Rican activist, Lolita Lebron.

During rehearsal, the director requested that Luz bring a red lipstick, preferably in a shiny tube to apply on her lips in one of the play’s pivotal scenes. Luz, who had cautiously saved her “Drama” labeled lipstick from her days in Dallas, brought out the silver tube and used the lipstick each night of the performance. It was a realization that she had once again thought a dream into existence.

Luz performed in sold-out shows to approving audiences.

Since then, Luz has focused on spreading good energy and helping others heal through spiritual events

and cleansing sessions. She launched a podcast, *Let there Be Luz*, which takes listeners on a transformative spiritual journey and subjects such as using the power of the menstrual cycle to manifest one’s true intentions, are frequently discussed.

Luz attributes her harmony to her children. After her experience as a teenage mother, she didn’t think she’d have another child. Becoming a mother for the second time at a different moment in her life, however, proved to be the most healing aspect of her motherhood experience. And Luz cites her boyfriend as a guiding force behind her newly-found peace.

“I just trust the love,” she says excitedly.

On this recent summer afternoon in Downtown LA’s Arts District, the light is bright and soothing. The light is Luz Warrior.

#MyMommyInLADay

What are you up to, Mama!? For over a year, we've been happy to repost Instagram photos of moms sharing tidbits of their day using the term *My 'Mommy In LA' Day*. While we enjoy seeing the kids, we LOVE seeing L.A. Moms take selfies, share mom thoughts, pose with their mom tribes or and show off their fun day in #LosAngelesCalifornia. Use the hashtag #MyMommyInLADay for chance to have your image featured in the next issue of Mommy In Los Angeles® Magazine.

1 @goodbadandfab
Looking forward to sharing my roots, heritage, and culture with my son at the Lunar New Year Celebration @san-tamonicaplace tomorrow. It'll be a new experience for him-one that's steeped in nostalgia for me. #mommyandson #lunarnewyear

2 @shaktinaran
This picture isn't perfect, but it's perfectly us! I am so proud of many things in life, but nothing beats being a mommy. Thank you, my little monkeys, for choosing me to be yours. I love you. #happymommysday #momlife

3 @noramacy
Adelante Mujer Conference in Fresno! #adelantemujerfresno #fresno #My-MommyInLADay

4 @expressingmotherhood
November in LA, running errands like the mom I am. I dialed the last year way back. I stopped writing and I'm finding it hard to get back into it. The critics in my head are loud. I admit to enjoying this domestic, quieter year. But it's time to get back on the writing horse.

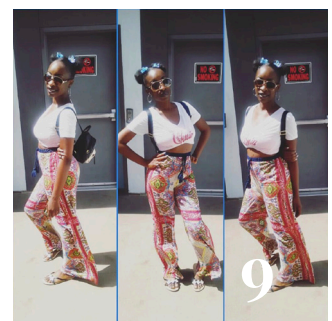
5 @bee_padilla
My baby is the sweetest #AdriadneEmma #Beyond_Motherhood

6 @lovethelaniers
Naturalista Beach day Mom Hack: Step 1. Go to the #99centstore and purchase a big a** hat. (I'm sure dollar tree works as well). Step 2. Cut the top out of the aforementioned hat. 3. Style hair on top of your head and go to beach. #yougotthis

7 @madisonmayfield
Finally got to celebrate my 21st Birthday in Vegas!! ... even though I'm almost 22

8 @alvarez_adventures
Last night we ate the cheesiest PIZZA at @cruisershuntington and afterwards I turned into a pizza angel! #alvarezadventures #pizzawings

9 @yummycolor
Natural hair vibes today. #MinnieMouse



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