



Clubbing, Laguna Beach Style: The Laguna Beach Parents Club is Modernizing the Moms Club

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Dads are moms too in the Laguna Beach Parents' Club. Members take a break from a recent play date at the Bluebird Park to gather for a photo.

Written by Rebecca Meekma

No amount of preparation can ready you for the life changes that come with being a first-time mom, but a little support can go a long way. That is the mission of the nationwide, non-profit organization, founded in 1983, called the MOMS Club. MOMS, which stands for Moms Offering Support to Moms, has a chapter in virtually every city of our county and is a great way for new moms to connect with one another. The MOMS Club provides a social outlet for stay-at-home moms (and about-to-be moms) and their young children. Navigating the world of motherhood is made easier by joining with a group of women who are experiencing the exact same stage of life. Questions and concerns are answered, milestones are celebrated and friendships connecting moms and kids are formed. Joining your local MOMS Club is a smart move for most women.

In 2005, a group of Laguna mothers took this idea and improved on it to meet the needs of the parents in their community. The MOMS Club was very popular in Laguna, to the point where the national organization wanted to split the club into three separate smaller clubs. When the Laguna Beach MOMS Club leaders and membership heard that, they didn't like it, as the club had created a strong bond with the parents of little ones in this diverse community. So, after a club vote and by utilizing the talents of many club members, including former attorneys and veterans



from the corporate and non-profit worlds, the non-profit Laguna Beach Parents' Club was created, with a mission to be an inclusive support system for all parents in Laguna Beach.

A major tenet in the Parents' Club is inclusiveness. Laguna is known as a town that embraces diversity, and the Parents Club is no different. Some member families are headed by single moms or single dads; some have stay-at-home dads while mom is out in the corporate world and some families have two moms or two dads. Everyone is welcome as all club members are brought together by the shared goal of raising happy children and creating the best possible parenting and family experience for all.

The club's membership has grown steadily each year; currently there are 276 member-families, easily one of the largest moms' clubs in Orange County. With an emphasis on the entire family, the Laguna Beach Parents' Club strives to serve all members of the family, starting with traditional resources like bringing meals to families with newborns and baby, toddler and preschooler group playdates, to Dads' Nights Out, topical speakers and even an annual Preschool and Kindergarten Forum so parents can learn about the educational offerings in Laguna. The annual Halloween Parade at Main Beach is enjoyed by the entire town. And the club even organizes a Halloween candy drive each year—they collect unwanted/extra Halloween candy and donate it to the men and women serving in the military.

Colleen Kelly and her husband joined the club before they had their first child. "The Laguna Beach Parents' Club became my lifeline before I even had kids," says Kelly. "I joined when I was pregnant with my first son and tapped into all of the resources immediately. While I participate in play dates, there is so much more to the group. While I expected to find fun activities to do with my kids, I had no idea how many doors the club would open, ultimately assisting me to be a well-rounded parent. I am so grateful to be part of the club!"