



# Single Parent Times

Volume 2, Issue 1

*Helping Single Parents in North Carolina*

May 2005

## NCSingleParent.com Celebrates Two Years *by Montie Roland*

On May 14th, the website is two years old. Thanks for sharing the journey with us!

Steve Monks, moderator of the "Ask an Attorney" forum and family law attorney has provided on-line information on more than 49 topics. Steve's legal issues forum is the most popular forum on the site.

Last month the website had 1293 unique visitors. In the entire year of 2004, the website had a approximately 7250 unique visitors. So far, this

year, we have had around 3600 visitors. The forums are the most popular destination on the site. The second most popular page on the entire site is the "Kids Eat Free" page which has been visited over 600 times this year alone.

In the past two years, the *Single Parent Times*, has gone out 6 times. Our goal for 2005 is to release the newsletter twice per month. Debbie Johnson is now the Newsletter Editor. She has a background in corporate marketing. We are

excited to have her as a part of the NCSingleParent.com staff.

While numbers can be a useful metric, the real measure of our success is when we can help one single parent at a time. Please continue to let us know how we can do a better job helping fellow single parents throughout NC.

*If you have any comments, suggestions, or needs please don't hesitate to contact me by e-mail at [montie@ncsingleparent.com](mailto:montie@ncsingleparent.com).*

## Mother's Day and The Single Mom *by Christine Myers*

Mother's Day is the holiday devoted to Mom. Children everywhere make crafts in school or scouts to show Mom how much they love them, older chil-

dren perhaps step up their chores and use some hard earned money to buy Mom something special, and adult children mark their calendars

to make sure they don't forget to send Mom flowers and a card on their special day. As any mother knows, motherhood is

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## My Name is Debbie, Not Just Mom *by Debbie Johnson*

I started out as a single mom when my son was just 3 months old. I was petrified at the prospect of just being a new mom, let alone being a single mom with an infant. I was lucky to have great support from my family and friends. Initially, raising my son consumed my

life and I became accustomed to hearing Luke's mom instead of Debbie. Around the time my son turned 1 year old, however, I realized I needed to find out who Debbie was again. I was always very social and loved music and dancing. I taught handicapped adults many years

ago and was told I was a good teacher. The first group I joined was Parents Without Partners and, shortly thereafter, Triangle Singles. Many times at get-togethers, I ended up teaching folks how to do the latest line dance or couples

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## Mother's Day and The Single Mom

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the hardest job in the world. Why just one day? Why not National Mother's Week? Or National Mother's Month? We should have at least a week dedicated on the Hallmark calendar devoted to all we do!

For many people, the most complicated thing about Mother's Day is where to spend the day and with whom. If you're married, that means deciding whether to spend the day at home with your immediate family or deciding which parent's house to visit. Should we have dinner with my mother or your mother? Maybe brunch with my mother and dinner with your Mom? Or maybe we should just invite everyone here for dinner? The logistics here can require a seating chart, a graph indicating which holidays you've spent with whom for the past five years, and a high-speed connection to Mapquest.

The Mother's Day equation is much more complex when you're a single Mom. Yes, Mother's Day is the day set aside for your children to celebrate the love they have for you and the appreciation for all you do. It's also the holiday where, traditionally, Dad's show their devotion to the woman who has mothered their children. Whether you're divorced, separated, widowed, or never married; Mother's Day is a day that can't help but be a reminder of that particular piece of your puzzle

that is missing. If you're widowed, Mother's Day can be both a day of sadness and joy, sadness because of what you've lost and good memories from what you shared. If you're divorced, even if you had a bad marriage, you still can't but help to be reminded that you're alone. Regardless of the reasons why you're a single parent this is one holiday that puts the fact that you're a single mom front and center.

Then there's the question of visitation and where your children will spend Mother's Day. Are your children scheduled to be with Dad on Mother's Day? If you're kids only spend every other weekend with Dad, chances are you need a break when that weekend rolls around. Would it be better to spend the day alone and pamper yourself or alter the visitation to schedule to be with your children on this special day?

While no solution is perfect, my single parents group has come up with a nifty way to deal with the Mother's Day dilemma. I've been a member of Parent's Without Partners for five years. Each year our chapter holds we hold a large picnic for Mother's Day. The chapter provides the hot dogs and hamburgers and the rest of the members bring side dishes to share. The picnic is always at a covered shelter at a local park so the event can be held rain or shine (Mother's Day has no "rain date") and there's a playground for the

younger children. What's really nice is that for the Mother's Day picnic, the single Dads in the chapter have to do all the shopping, set up, BBQ'ing, serving, and clean up. The end result is an enjoyable afternoon spent with friends who are also single parents and facing the same struggle with the holiday that you are. If you're a single Mom with your children, then bringing them with you to the picnic means you get to spend an enjoyable afternoon together (and you still don't have to cook dinner or clean up!). If you find yourself alone on what can be a very hard holiday for a single mother, then attending the picnic is a way to connect with others who share your feelings. Parents Without Partners recognizes that for many single parents any holiday can be a difficult time and the group works hard to make sure no one is alone when the going can be particularly rough.

For me, that first Mother's Day was hard. My children were in elementary school and were excited about the things they made me for Mother's Day. There was no question that they wanted to spend the day with me. Still, wondering how Mother's Day would affect us all emotionally loomed large. Attending our first Mother's Day picnic with the group was a balm to my spirit and my children had such a good time I'm not sure they even realized anything was all that much different.

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## My Name is Debbie, Not Just Mom

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dance when they learned that I volunteered to teach dance. It combined my love for people and my love for dance. I needed an outlet as a single mom that allowed me to let down my hair and reduce the high stress level I dealt with all week as both a full time professional and a full time single mom.

I was determined not to lose my identity as an adult who has the same needs now as I did before I had a child. After my son was a few years old, I volunteered to be on boards and managed to intertwine my love for dance with helping those organizations. I coordinated dances for many groups in the area and taught dancing as a volunteer. As a result of staying true to myself and keeping my passion for dancing and teaching alive, I know I have become a much better single mother. I was able to get my dancing and socializing "fix" on the weekends I did not have my son, so I could put on

my other hat as a caring, involved mom the rest of the time.

After 11 years of being a single parent, I have learned that you must still be an individual and follow your dreams. I have witnessed many times that people became so involved with

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their children's lives to make up for not being part of a two-parent family that they lost their own identity in the proc-

ess. Then some of these parents began to resent spending all their spare time with their children and took their frustrations out on their children. There has to be a balance.

Happiness is a journey, not a destination - so take time to follow your passions; whether it be taking time to read a good book, getting involved in a social club, or volunteering for an organization that has ties near and dear to your heart. This will not only make your life more full and meaningful, but it is a great way to relieve stress and we all need more of that in our lives! . And don't forget these words to live by .... Work Like You Don't Need Money, Love Like You Have Never Been Hurt, and Dance Like No One's Watching!

*For more information about dance lessons you can contact Debbie Johnson by e-mail at [debbie@ncsingleparent.com](mailto:debbie@ncsingleparent.com) or visit her website at*

*[home.bellsouth.net/p/PWP-dancindeb](http://home.bellsouth.net/p/PWP-dancindeb)*

## Mom Down on the Farm? *by Brad Harbaugh, Singles Pastor, Colonial Baptist*

Well, before you have a 'cow' with my title, allow me to explain. The Pickin', Playin', Praisin' event this year falls on Mothers Day weekend! It is a super event and is single parent-friendly.

It features: Rhett McLaughlin, campus speaker and comedian, the band "Leaving Babylon", which will lead us in worship, outrageous games, separate games for the children and of course "Pig Pickin' with the fixin's". (I think they should call North Carolina 'the drop the "g" state!') There is a hayride shuttle to the farm, a big top tent to shield us from the sun.

Mom needs fresh air and the equestrian farm will provide that along with some fun, food and games for the kids. There will be childcare from 4:15 PM - 6:15 PM for toddlers and younger. There is a separate speaker for children.

Well, its not the mud pack or the manicure, but there will be mud and after playing in the games you will have an excuse to get a manicure. So mom, it's the day before your big day, 'Ham it up!' For more information visit [www.colonialsingles.org](http://www.colonialsingles.org) or call me at 919-233-9100 x1047.

# Single Parent Times

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## Single...With Children

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Over the years the Mother's Day picnic has been one of our most popular. Attendance can top well over 100 people and a good time is had by all, adults and children alike. For anyone who is a single parent, regardless of why, I can tell you that the single most important decision I ever made was to become involved with a single parents group that connects me with other people just like me. The emotional support, advice, and friendships that I've made over the years have made my journey in single parenthood infinitely easier and events like the Mother's Day picnic are just one example why. Connecting with others

who are navigating the minefield of single parenting along with you is an important part of dealing with your new life and moving on. For me, it helped me immensely emotionally. My children have had a chance to meet lots of other kids and single parent families in the same situation and they learned they weren't alone. We all made friends and we learned, on a deeper level, that we would come to terms with our new family unit and that we wouldn't only be okay, we were going to be great!

Everyone deals with becoming a single parent differently. Regardless of the reason why you're a single parent, connect-

ing with others who share your single parenting view of the world can be an important, positive decision. Whether you desire to spiritually connect with other single parents in a group with your church or desire a more social, non-secular group, I definitely recommend seeking out a single parenting group in your area.

*For more information about PWP, contact Christine Myers by phone at 919-547-4466 or visit [www.capitalareapwp.com](http://www.capitalareapwp.com) Pictures from last year's Mother's Day Picnic are available at:*

[www.ncsingleparent.com/  
pwp\\_mother's\\_day\\_lunch.htm](http://www.ncsingleparent.com/pwp_mother's_day_lunch.htm)