

# springfieldmoms.org

By Amy Denney

Photos By Bridget Shaw

There are plenty of resources for finding something entertaining to do in Springfield, but there happens to be a not-so-secret hot spot for parents who want time-saving, memory-making ideas.

SpringfieldMoms.org is the go-to place for local events, but it also happens to be a resource for kids' classes, sports and camp directories, birthday party planning, a local kids-eat-free dining guide, day trip ideas, neighborhood garage sales and so much more. And it's free.

"To me, the best information is the insight into local business and services," said Ronda Scheerer, whose children range in age from 7 to 25. "Whether I'm looking for an orthodontist for my teenage son, or a weekend event to occupy my family, SpringfieldMoms.org puts everything in one place for me to find."

She's been using the online resource for about three years, after the Fall Guide first caught her eye when it was shared on Facebook.

"I'd have to say, one of the biggest ways it has impacted my life is by offering opportunities to win tickets to local events," Ronda said. "I've won tickets to The Legacy Theatre, The Muni, and a Springfield Blues game — events I shared with my kids and thoroughly enjoyed."

Julie Kaiser was one of the early volunteers to catch Kim Leistner Root's vision for SpringfieldMoms.org. She was then a stay-at-home mom who was asked by a friend to share book recommendations for this new online family resource.

"I wasn't working at the time. I met Kim, fell in love with her enthusiasm...and came on board," Julie said.

With her experience working with media and marketing, she was a whiz helping Kim establish her new brand, which struck a chord with hundreds and then thousands of local families. First, she had to hit the streets with fliers and pound the pavement at community events.



"It was blood, sweat and tears and very little sleep, but I knew the need was there," Kim said. "I knew I was filling a niche. It felt good."

Her market: busy people who live in the Springfield area who want to have fun, make memories and save time.

The idea was born out of a casual gathering of moms in Kim's basement. Her daughters Amanda and Vanessa, now 14 and 12 respectively, were just 2 and 9 months at the time.

"We couldn't figure out why you couldn't just go to one place and find out where you can go with your kids," she said.

She compiled her first email newsletter and sent it to 30 friends, asking them to pass it along to all of their friends. She also attended community events pretty much non-stop.

What seemed like a "simple idea" actually entailed hours of planning, information gather, website updating and promotion — weekly. Once her girls were old enough to pass out brochures, they had a job when they accompanied her.

"The moments of discouragement came when it was a Sunday morning or afternoon when I had to update the website,

but I really just wanted to read a book," Kim admitted.

But like any successful entrepreneur, she kept her why front and center. She never took a loan to launch her venture, nor did she take a salary for the work she did, instead socking away any proceeds in college funds that her daughters can use. It excited them and motivated her.

Because they have been so involved from the beginning, Kim's daughters witness that mom works really hard and makes a difference in the community. Often, they'll be with her when someone in the community recognizes her out in public and thanks her for the impact SpringfieldMoms.org has had on their lives.

"I want to know I'm making a difference. The website was a way to do that while using my business skills that I really like," Kim said. "This is why I do it, for the thanks and appreciation."

It has become a community project in many ways, with sponsors, readers and freelance writers all helping create and contribute information that helps local families in some way.

"I really did buy into this idea that what can you involve your family in, not the