

national stuff. We wanted to be hyper local," Julie said. "It was information I was looking for myself and information I was sharing with my own friends and family. So why not share it with the community at large? I am not one to hoard information."

Kim added: "Why should we each have a file of summer camps? We need to share these things."

Like Julie, the other staff were first readers of the website and met Kim by emailing suggestions for new resources. Without these women, the website would not be celebrating 12 years serving the community. The team of Julie; Dawn Raycraft, Sherman; Lisa Whelpley, Chatham; Lauren Coleman, Pleasant Plains; and Kari Thevenot, Rochester, ensure SpringfieldMoms.org is providing current resources and tips straight from the moms who live here.

"Every once in a while you get a nasty-gram. As with anything, you can't take everything personally," Kim said. "Sometimes I never know what's going to be in my inbox, if I'm in Ann Landers mode or if I'm just pointing somebody to the right resource."

She's quick to point out that a lot of people have no place to vent and are desperate for resources for raising grandchildren, after-school care or affording back-to-school supplies. SpringfieldMoms.org has helped many simply by directing them to a support group.



Kim maintained her full-time career in higher education publishing and now works as a market development consultant in addition to running the website. She's come to realize more than ever that Springfield is not a place where anyone can complain "there's nothing to do," as it's rich with a plethora of events, activities and resources for any type of family and budget.

Kimberly Hepperly, a Springfield mom with children who are 12 and 9, has used the website since its inception when she was searching online for parenting resources.

"I use the kids eat free dining guide a lot," she said. "I love the seasonal activities guides. It is so convenient to go to the website and find fun, family friendly events for my kids."

As often as she checks the website, special guides and Facebook page, Kimberly just discovered that SpringfieldMoms.org has a pet resources page in the A-Z Index Guide. "As the owner of a new puppy, I was thrilled to find that one!"

Just as the website itself has evolved so have the methods for promoting SpringfieldMoms.org.

At some point it was suggested that SpringfieldMoms.org should have a Facebook page. Kim still marvels at the impact social media has made on exposure. There are more than 9,600 fans who follow the Facebook community.



That has not only helped SpringfieldMoms.org grow, but it's changed the dynamics of its relationship with followers.

"We get to know them," Kim said. "I can see pictures of them and their cute kids and see what they're doing."

She still pins fliers on bulletin boards at local businesses, too. And now her daughter Amanda is using her creative skills to help with the Instagram page and create videos for sponsors. All the while, she's developing her own portfolio of work — a baton passing Kim could never have conceived that makes her beam with pride.

"You can never do too much to let people know about resources. There's always something new to discover," she added. "You've got to keep the word out there about what's going on."

Aaron Rath, father to a 4-year-old daughter, is proof of that. He just learned about SpringfieldMoms.org at the 2016 Old State Capitol Farmers' Market Halloween contest.

He instantly became the No. 1 fan and intends to do what he can to spread the word.

"I will be recommending this site to friends and to other parents at my daughter's school. It is a very helpful resource with many categories to choose from," he said. "I am so glad that I was introduced to this site. I am very impressed with this website and all the wonderful information it provides. I will be referring to this quite often to look for things that my daughter and I can do, like arts and crafts or events to attend etc."