

# What do you do all day?

## LOCAL MOMS SHARE A DAY IN THEIR LIVES

**"What do you do all day?"** This phrase has plagued moms for decades. It was uttered by unsupportive husbands to housewives back when women working outside the home was unacceptable. It's been asked by clueless employers who don't understand a mom's need for flexible work hours. It's been queried by astonished former colleagues who can't comprehend when a woman quits her full-time job to spend more time with the kids.

Regardless of whether we stay home with the kids, work outside the home most of the day, or like a lot of moms, manage to accomplish, something in between, we (moms who are involved in our kids' lives) know the answer to the ubiquitous question: A LOT!

How about a more specific answer? Here's a deeper look at just a few moments in the busy days of local moms.

## Katrina: **Entrepreneur mom**

### KATRINA'S SUPERMOM MOMENT:

*Life can really get crazy, and sometimes I feel like I live out of my minivan. But some days just work perfectly. Like on one of my best days, I started off the day in downtown Milwaukee at the InterContinental Hotel with a big presentation at a conference at 7:30 a.m. After that, I had to be back in Richfield for another talk at 11 a.m. And then I had a radio interview in Greenfield at 2 in the afternoon. And with all that, I got home before the bus. I was like, "Score!" I got all that work in and was still home before Billy got home. He didn't even know I was gone. That's a perfect kind of a day; that's a win.*

**Katrina Cravy** has been a household name in Milwaukee for the past two decades as the Fox 6 consumer reporter, as a host of "Real Milwaukee" and as a regular guest on the WKLB Morning Show.

She recently left her day job to start her own business. Katrina's years in the media gave her insight into what people need to do to get their businesses, their brands and themselves attention from the media – insight she shares as a public speaker, in coaching sessions and in her book "On Air: Insider secrets to attract the media and get free publicity."

Her latest venture as a public speaker and coach to individuals and businesses looking to get attention in the media, is very relevant to the question of moms' lives. She refers to "Women Rule!", one of her "keynote conversations" as her "Rah Rah, Women!" speech: "I try to explain to women why we do rule the world. Would there ever be another Christmas or Thanksgiving if we didn't put it on?"

And, of course, the planning of those holidays has to happen in between working, spending time at the kids' activities and generally keeping life running smoothly, something Katrina is very aware of as she balances her work life and her family life with her husband Scott and their 11-year-old son Billy.

Read on to check out the beginning, middle and end of a typical day in Katrina's life!

**6:15 a.m.:** Since it's a Wednesday, I have to leave around this time to get to WKLB (She is a regular guest on Wednesdays and Fridays.). I still have already been up for awhile, working, sometimes walking with my neighbor. I do KLH, then come back home to pick up Billy from school for the MetroParent photo shoot.

**4:30 p.m.:** I have to pick up Billy (who I drove back to school following the photo shoot) early from basketball practice in order to get him to piano lessons in West Bend by 5. We usually live on PowerBars in the car during these hectic days, but Billy thought he was getting Subway for lunch for some reason, and he was so good at the photo shoot that I think I'll run and surprise him with some Subway. He'll like that.

**More online!** Although Katrina doesn't consider herself a "traditional mom" (she even thinks "Pinterest is the death of all mothers"), she does admit to making sure she does one traditionally motherly thing with Billy. Check out the birthday cakes she makes with her son at [metroparentmagazine.com](http://metroparentmagazine.com).



ROBERTA RAE PHOTOGRAPHY

Katrina and Billy get silly.

**7:00 p.m.:** Billy is practicing his saxophone in his room. I hear Scott go into the room, and they're laughing together trying to figure out how to play the opening notes to "Brass Monkey." I go in there too and lay on Billy's bed while we all spend a few minutes laughing together. It's rare for us all to be in his room, which is small, so I know this is something Billy will remember, us all talking about music, which is his love. We have to make an effort to do those out-of-the-ordinary things because those are moments kids will remember.



# Gina: Stay-at-home mom to school-age girls

**Gina**, mom of 7-year-old Julia and 6-year-old Lily, is the mom people think of when asking stay-at-home moms what they do all day. Some people don't understand how moms with kids in school during the day manage to fill their time. Gina is the person who keeps her family's lives running smoothly -- in between crazy mornings and bedtimes!

## GINA'S MOM IDENTITY:

*I find my day is often consumed by a lot of small things, things that need to get done. I am the one who remembers: to buy the guinea pig food, to take the car in for an oil change, when it's someone's birthday. These are all things that need to get done, and I'm comfortable with doing them because they're easy to check off my list. When I don't have a big project though, I get to feel a bit aimless and like I need something bigger to sink my teeth into.*



Gina hangs out with daughters Julia and Lily.

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**More online!** Gina loves that being a stay-at-home mom allows her the time to be involved in her daughters' day-to-day lives. But she feels the conflict common to lots of stay-at-home moms: how to maintain that degree of involvement while also getting the chance to do a job that's meaningful to her. Check out [metroparentmagazine.com](http://metroparentmagazine.com) for more of Gina's thoughts on the subject.

**8:20 a.m.:** It's classroom campout day for my second-grader, and she's debating whether or not to bring her pillow. Meanwhile, my kindergartner is moving as slowly as molasses, dawdling over her Rice Krispies, getting sidetracked by the markers and art paper strewn on the kitchen floor. It's around this time that I sometimes start to feel the cold sweat of "OMG, we are going to miss the bus, we're running out of time!" My heart rate goes up, my breathing quickens and my brain is buzzing. I'm constantly moving, whirling around to grab coats and stuffing them in my daughters' arms, offering a few last sips of milk, digging through the dryer to find the pants my daughter insists on wearing practically every day.

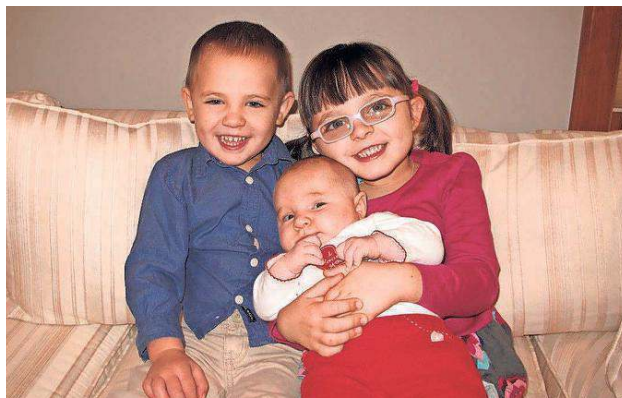
**7:45 p.m.:** My husband and I give the kids a heads-up: time to get ready for bed. Despite my best intentions, I've never quite mastered the bedtime routine, which seems to drag on for eons in our household. Even if it's not a bath night, there's a long, drawn-out routine of brushing teeth, getting a cup of "night water," changing into PJs and reading books. But I'm glad I have this quiet time with my daughters, especially as they get older and school and extracurricular activities take up more of their waking hours.



Lily creates an after-school masterpiece.

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Louise, John and Elizabeth pose for an adorable photo.

## Jane: Stay-at-home mom to three"5 and unders"

**Jane**, a stay-at-home mom to 5-year-old Louise, 3-year-old John and 6-month-old Elizabeth, is right in the thick of high-needs, crazy, full-on parenting. Before she and her husband became parents, she used her business administration degree at an operations management company, but, since her husband is a pilot who is out of town a lot, it makes sense for her to be home with the kids now. She says, "I already feel like a single parent half the time. Until Elizabeth is in school full-time, I won't even think about working outside the home. With my husband being gone so much, I'm the consistent parent."

### JANE'S MOM INSIGHT:

*I feel like, as a stay-at-home mom, it's kind of like Groundhog Day. They eat, I clean up, they play, they eat, I clean up, they play. My days are always somewhat similar, just always with some crazy element thrown in.*

**8:17-8:27 a.m.** (yes, moms often have their lives scheduled in these crazy-specific time increments because we live and die by school bus timetables, Mommy-and-me class start times and carpool line pickup times.): All four of us head outside to wait for the school bus to pick up my daughter. We don't know the exact time the bus will come, so we have to be out there by 8:17. While we wait, my son steps in a snow pile, and of course he didn't have boots on, and of course it's a preschool morning for him, so he needs new socks. The bus is running late, so we run inside to get new socks. I put the baby down in her carseat, and when I pick her up, see that she's had a diaper blowout. After waving goodbye to my older daughter, I quickly wash the baby up, spot clean her outfit and get the little kids in the car to drive my son to preschool.

**More online!** Jane feels like, for a stay-at-home mom to stay sane, structure is necessary. Check out her extremely scheduled, extremely busy, extremely crazy full day at [metroparentmagazine.com](http://metroparentmagazine.com).

## Liz: Working mom of four

If there's one thing that parents are made aware of very early on in their parenting careers, it's that flexibility is key. It's very unlikely that things will turn out the way you expected them to, and you need to be able to roll with that. **Liz**, mom of 7-year-old twins, Carter and Emma, 5-year-old Sydney and 8-month old Caleb found that out when her twins were born nearly two months premature.

Before their birth, Liz had planned to go back to her full-time job at a software tech firm. However, after realizing that her twins would need at least two years of physical, occupational and speech therapy, Liz decided to become a stay-at-home mom.

Her desire to get back into the working world a few years later in a capacity that would allow her to spend time with her growing family led her on a different career path that eventually ended up where she is now, working as a grant-writer at Discovery World, sometimes onsite and sometimes from home.

Here are just a few moments in a typical work-outside-the-home day.

**8 a.m.:** I corral the big kids upstairs to get dressed for school. As I'm doing so, I clean up their dishes and load them in the dishwasher and start running that. I also quickly throw one of the premade puree mixes that I'd created on the weekend for Caleb into the microwave.

I nag, nag, nag, *get dressed, faster, please hurry up*. I watch while they brush teeth and use lice spray, and do the girls' hair. The kids are required to use a timer when brushing their teeth so they brush long enough and are not allowed to leave the house without using lice spray after getting them twice last year. I straighten anything that got messed up in their bedrooms and put Caleb's clothes on for the day.



C.T. KRUGER/NOW MEDIA GROUP

Liz hangs out at Discovery World with her four kids, Emma, Caleb, Sydney and Carter.

**4 p.m.:** I leave the office, sit in traffic (hooray!) and try to get home to beat the bus, which comes at 4:30pm.

**4:40 p.m.:** Since I usually don't beat the bus ... I come home and check in with Leah (the nanny) about how the day went. I chat about the rest of the week and say goodbye to her. I pick up the baby and get the big kids off their iPads since I wasn't home to intercept them and have them do their homework first thing. I sit down and do our math and reading homework. In the meantime, I put Caleb in a bouncer or hold him while helping the kids with questions on homework and packing their snacks and lunches for the next day. Sydney is allowed to watch TV during this time.

**LIZ'S MOM WISDOM:** *If asked what is priority for me, I'd say everything. When I have discussions with my husband about my stress level and what to cut out, I simply don't know. I like to keep my house very neat, I like to do my own laundry and want to monitor my children's habits so they're done right. I also love working and my job and love teaching spinning. Lastly, I love to run and have run several marathons and half marathons. I did a half when Caleb was three months old and it was so trying after such a short time since his birth. I've got another half in May that I want to be closer to my pre-Caleb time so I need to keep on my training runs. So, that's not going away either.*

**So life continues to be chaotic and that's okay.**

**More online!** Moms are experts at juggling work and home, and that's even more true when you work in a place that's so cool for kids to hang out at! Check out [metroparentmagazine.com](http://metroparentmagazine.com) to see more photos of Liz and her kids hanging out at Discovery World.



# Julie: Author, realtor, radio DJ mom

As is clear from **Julie's** day-in-the-life, this mom can write. Of course all moms wear a lot of hats in their day-to-day lives; hers include radio personality on 93.3 FM, realtor and most recently, author of **"From Conception to Confusion."** Julie wrote the book about raising her sons, 14-year-old Miles and 13-year-old Max with her husband, Charles. And she explains that she started writing about her life when people would comment on how much they loved her "funny, tell-it-like-it-is holiday cards."

Here's a look at some of those funny, "tell-it-like-it-is" moments excerpted from one of her typical days.

**7:00 a.m.:** My husband is ready to leave (I mean for work. Just to clarify). This is when I begin to loudly do a countdown until departure time: "Thirty minutes! Did you eat? Get dressed and bring down your backpacks. We need to leave by 7:30. Thirty minutes!" It's like the announcement that your favorite store makes when they close. People hear it, but no one really listens.

Inevitably, there is last-minute drama that involves, but is not limited to, a sock without a mate, an empty milk carton, a sore throat or the dreaded wad of backpack mail now finding its way out of the overstuffed backpack. "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Now? You need this signed, now? It was sent home last week!"

Of course by 7:40 I'm in full panic mode.

**9:00 a.m.:** I'm meeting with the team. Now I feel grown-up. We discuss the housing market, our new marketing strategies and the trends of buyers and sellers. Carpool seems like a distant memory.

**From 10:00 a.m. until noon:** I'm on the phone with clients, checking in and scheduling appointments. I sneak out for lunch when I can. I have appointments with clients throughout the afternoon.

**3:00 p.m.:** What? It's 3:00. But I've got stuff to do! Quick. Think. Am I picking the kids up from the carpool line? Wait-I think they have an after-school activity at school. Or maybe just one of them...

**3:30 p.m.:** In carpool line. On the phone. Cell battery dying. I love to watch the kids as they come practically skipping to the car. I try to finish all business calls so I can be present for the kids. Really present. This is their time to decompress.

We are heading home. As we drive, I hear tales of which kid barfed in the hallway. They tell me how much homework they have. I find out what happened in gym class, what they ate for lunch, what they wish they ate for lunch, what that one kid who has the cool mom got in his lunch.



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Julie and her family enjoy a dinner out.

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Max helps Julie out with the grocery shopping.

**JULIE'S MOM INSIGHT ON BALANCING FAMILY AND WORK:** *The simple answer is, I don't. For example, today the house is a wreck. Not quite an episode of "Hoarders" type of wreck, but it's far from company-ready. Twice today we got takeout food. But on the other hand, I served my clients well, my book sales are increasing and my kids are healthy. You make choices. Do you want to make it to work on time with dog hair all over your pants, or are you willing to be 10 minutes late with no fur attached?*

**More online!** Do you love Julie's funny, honest writing as much as we do? Check out the rest of her day-in-the-life, including her reflections on life in a one-bathroom house, at [metroparentmagazine.com](http://metroparentmagazine.com)





SUBMITTED PHOTO

# Mom Meals

Do you ever feel like a failure at mealtimes because you're positive that all the other moms are feeding their kids perfectly balanced, nutritious meals, all while they enjoy their calorie-conscious, organic, protein-laden, carb-free delicacies?

Think again. Every mom who contributed her day in the life touched on the subject of food. Check out reality in these mom meal moments

**Julie, 5:00 p.m.:** Dinner time. Uh oh. Never got to the grocery store. I go through the fridge and the cabinets. Five food groups? Not tonight. *Why didn't I get more at the grocery store?* I'm just looking for five different things to put on a plate. Unless Cheez Whiz is a food group. Canned veggies will do. Bagels. Sausage and crackers.

**Liz, 8:10p.m.:** Head downstairs and start to make dinner for Peter and me. He's sometimes home already, other times, he's stuck at the office and just getting home. If I was on my game, I would have something nice prepared for him previously that I could reheat. If not, he gets a chicken breast sandwich and a salad or something of the like. I'm an almost-vegan so I make myself a giant salad and I'm good. At this point, I just want to go to bed and don't even care if I eat.

**Gina, 5:50 p.m.:** We're home and everyone, including Mama, is a tad cranky and ready to refuel with dinner. I'd love to say I'm ambitious enough to prep something ahead of time, but most days, we end up eating something ridiculously simple: pasta or veggie tacos, sometimes a dressed-up rice and beans bowl loaded with avocado and cheese.

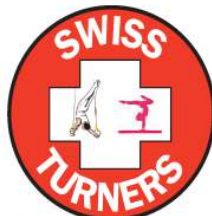
**Jane, 12:30 p.m.:** After the kids are done with their food, I might sit down for a quick sandwich. Mostly I eat the leftover scraps from the kids' meals. I miss sitting down for a meal, but there's always someone crying or needing something. Plus, I feel like my hands are always messy around lunchtime from cutting things, opening things or pulling things apart for kids.

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