

■ Travelling Tories cut back by 40% / A6  
 ■ Festivals ready to celebrate winter / A6

**Coming Soon**  
 Edmonton South Park Centre  
 24 HR Co-Ed and for Women  
**780-466-4124**

**Goodlife CO-ED FITNESS**  
 for WOMEN  
 24 HOURS

Visit [goodlifefitness.com](http://goodlifefitness.com) for details

A5 / EDITOR: THERESE KEHLER, 780-429-5399; city@thejournal.canwest.com

EDMONTON JOURNAL / MONDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2010

# 'Mompreneurs' keep on networking

**Bossy Mama website connects women and work**

ANDREA SANDS  
 Journal Staff Writer  
 EDMONTON

Moms get plenty of practice bossing people around. At home, they balance the books, manage transportation requirements, track key dates, delegate jobs and handle food services.

For many women who shift from professional life to maternity leave, starting a new business can be a natural fit — a way to put those multitasking skills to use while making money closer to home.

The trouble is, those former professionals often cultivated their business connections by schmoozing at lunches, business association events and chamber of commerce gatherings. After a year on maternity leave, networking has usually taken a back seat to diaper changing.

That's why "mompreneur" Carol McBee is starting Bossy Mama, a mom-centred networking organization and website for Edmonton entrepreneurs.

"There really isn't a proper network for professional moms who own their own businesses, so I envision it to be like the networking events that a lot of us really miss those events, or at least I do, but they might not be the right platform for us to attend anymore," McBee said in an interview.

Studies show a dramatic increase over the last two decades in the number of women across Canada who have started their own businesses, many motivated by a desire to better balance work and family life.

"I think people are starting to think more traditionally, in terms of their families," McBee said. "People are going back to cloth diapers and organics and are trying to be old-fashioned in their lifestyle and more healthy and sort of pure."

When their maternity leave is up, they want to be the traditional, classic stay-at-home mother, but things are so expensive it's nearly impossible, unless you had things sorted out really well before you had your baby. Especially these days, when women aren't making extra income, they're making half the income."

According to Statistics Canada, close to 900,000 women — 11 per cent of all those with jobs — were self-employed in 2006.

More than one million Canadian women were expected to be running their own businesses by this year, said a CIBC report released in 2005. Between 1989 and 2004, the



'Mompreneur' Carol McBee, here with her one-year-old daughter Madelyn, has started a local website, [bossymama.ca](http://bossymama.ca), that caters to mothers who are also professionals.

number of women entrepreneurs in Canada grew by 50 per cent, the report said. More than 70 per cent of those female business owners were married and about one-third of them had children younger than 12.

In response, mompreneur websites, magazines and networking groups have been springing up across the country.

McBee has already been approached by another "mompreneur" networking company out of British Columbia that's interested in taking over her Edmonton group. She is considering becoming a director with that company to run their program here.

When McBee gave birth to her daughter, Madelyn, in November 2008, she decided not to return to her full-time job as corporate programs manager for Cold FX. However, McBee continues to run her five-year-old Canadian Houses

business, a virtual tour and photography company that shoots video and photos for real estate agents and builders.

She is also starting another business venture — a program designed for new moms and their babies, called Mommy Connections. The six-week program that starts Thursday will initially cater to south-side moms, giving them a chance to socialize while learning about a variety of topics, including post-natal fitness, baby nutrition, finding child care, baby massage and fun classes available for new moms.

McBee hopes to quickly expand Mommy Connections city wide. Mompreneur Andrea Page, creator of Fitmom, will be speaking at McBee's Mommy Connections classes and has also joined McBee's Bossy Mama site.

In 2000, when Page was a single

mother living on welfare in Toronto, she established Fitmom, a prenatal and postnatal fitness program that encourages moms to exercise with their children.

The former competitive gymnast is a personal trainer and mother of three boys, ages 10, six and four. Page also has training in prenatal and postnatal fitness, as a prenatal yoga teacher, as a doula and as a childbirth educator. Her Fitmom program is expanding across Canada and her e-books and DVDs, including *Mommy Got a Six-Pack*, are available throughout North America.

Page moved to Edmonton last summer from Toronto, and said she is looking forward to learning from local mompreneurs.

"Carol has approached some key people in the city who are really successful in business to lead this group in the right direction. ... I really look forward to being able to connect to this wide range of business women and the business culture in Edmonton," said Page.

Mompreneurs need all the support they can get when juggling their different roles, Page said, "because the

reality is, 90 per cent of them are still going home and doing the cooking and the laundry."

The first Bossy Mama event will likely be held in late January or early February. Discussion topics include Internet marketing, public speaking, branding a business, taxation on small businesses and balancing work as CEO of a company and a household.

Edmonton mompreneur Jessica Baudin-Griffin, owner of J'Adore Dance, said she is optimistic the Bossy Mama group will be valuable.

The former elementary school teacher and mother of two girls, ages three and 13 months, started teaching evening dance classes when her oldest daughter was four months old. In January 2007, she started teaching Salsa Babies classes, and now her company teaches a variety of dance and fitness classes — about 60 dance per week — throughout the Edmonton region.

She shares childcare responsibilities with her husband, who now works from home.

[asands@thejournal.canwest.com](mailto:asands@thejournal.canwest.com)

**Airport debate, new arena some of my favourite things**

*Columnist McKen looks back at the year that was and what he said about it*

**Prepare for traffic chaos**