

Moms RECHARGE in exclusive group

Women share their motherhood thrills, woes

BY YADIRA SANCHEZ OLSON

ysanchezolson@stmedianetwork.com
|@yadira_olson

Cheerios, cartoons and diapers aren't the only things Katie Tilton thinks about. They're on her mind a lot, but twice a month the mom of three from Third Lake also gets to join a group of about 40 mothers and "just be Katie. Not mommy or wife," Tilton said.

Tilton is a member of RECHARGE, a group exclusive to mothers of children ages 0-5 that meets every other Thursday at the Village Church of Gurnee on Hunt Club Road. It is where Tilton recharges her batteries and connects with other women from throughout the county to talk about the good, the bad and they ugly of motherhood.

"The first time I went was wonderful," Tilton said. "Sometimes as a mom you feel vulnerable and it's nice that people can say, 'Don't worry. It's no big deal. It's happened to me, too.'"

Tilton's oldest son Decklan Henrichs will be in preschool next year and she's using her group time to ask a lot of questions.

"We all give each other advice and share our triumphs and our failures," Tilton said.

There's another educational component, too. RECHARGE director Heather Smith of Lindenhurst said that she often asks moms what topics they're interested in learning about and then books speakers to go and talk about that subject.



A speaker from The Container Store shows RECHARGE moms how to make a perfect gift bow. | SUBMITTED PHOTOS

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KATIE/TILTON

They've had speakers discuss topics such as organizing a home, food allergies, saving money and women's pelvic health.

On April 24, a firefighter from the Gurnee Fire Department will pay the ladies a visit to speak about kids' safety.

But perhaps the best draw to the club is not that mothers get to hang

out for two hours eating breakfast, talking about their daily lives or even the crafts they make at the end of the hour. It is that while they do that, their children are being taken care of, free of charge, in the next room.

The volunteers who watch the children do age-appropriate crafts, games and stories with them. Tilton said at the end of their "mom's club" morning, as her son likes to call it, he always has good things to share with her about what he learned and who he played with. Many playdates and friendships have come out of the meet-ups, she said.

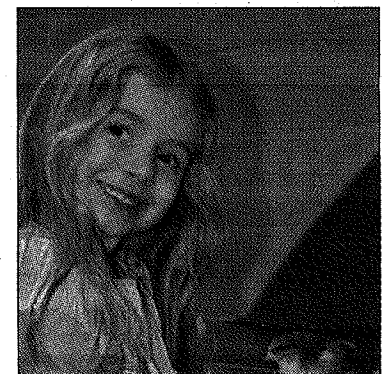
"As a mom, having a place to go

ABOUT RECHARGE

RECHARGE is a club for mom of children ages 0-5 that meets from 9:15 to 11:15 every other Thursday at Village Church of Gurnee on Hunt Club Road. There is a \$3 fee per week and childcare is available. Space is limited due to the adult to child ratio.

For more information, email Heather Smith at recharge.moms@vcgurnee.org

and interact with others and know that your children are in a safe place is great because you can relax and enjoy yourself," Smith said.



Nora Smith, 6, holds a baby chick that was brought in when the kids were learning about the life cycle of chickens in the childcare part of the RECHARGE program.