

A CHAT WITH...

Ashlee Gadd

Age: 31

Job: Founder of Coffee + Crumbs and author of "The Magic of Motherhood"

When Ashlee Gadd launched Coffee + Crumbs in 2013, the collaborative blog about motherhood found quick success, with three posts going viral. Then, the East Sacramento mom scored a book deal with Zondervan, releasing a collection of essays, "The Magic of Motherhood," this spring.

Mommy blogs are ubiquitous, but Coffee + Crumbs is different—more authentic, perhaps. Is that intentional?

My charge to the team is to write what's on your heart today. We're not thinking ahead or looking back. We're writing about the struggles we're working through as we're working through them, and I think that makes our writing raw.

What is important about mothers sharing their stories?

When you become a mom, even if you have mom friends, you can feel alone. When we share stories with one another—specifically about the hard things and our emotions, which often feel really irrational—and someone says, "Me, too," it helps us to not feel so isolated.

When you heard from a publisher, what was your reaction?

I was just holding in the barf. [Laughs] People had asked, "Are you going to do a book?" And I kept saying maybe in five years, once we're all better writers. But the first conversation with Zondervan, they said, "We love what you've made, and we want to make a beautiful book with you." That pulled a bit of the fear back—plus all the writers were like, "What are you doing? Of course we want to make a book!"

How do you connect with moms locally, offline?

Beyond close friends, I'm a member of MOPS [Mothers of Preschoolers] at Fremont Presbyte-



Ashlee Gadd with her recent book, a collection of essays from mothers

rian Church, and I'm in [an invite-only] Facebook group called East Sac and Friends Mom's Group. It's like 2,400 moms, and you can ask about anything—a pediatrician recommendation, sleep-training advice, whatever.

You describe "The Magic of Motherhood" as a "love letter to mothers everywhere." What is its message?

We want moms to feel known and seen and loved. There are so many different stories in the book—infertility, adoption, marriage, friendship—and my hope is that every person finds the entire book encouraging and at least one story that rings true for them.

Where do you find inspiration for your work?

My ideas often start with just a title or a concept or a sentence. Recently, when I changed my youngest son's diaper and kissed his tummy, he said, "Love you, too, Mama." So I have a note that says "Love you, too, Mama," and it will be an essay about how sweet it is to have your kid acknowl-

edge the ways you show love even when you don't say it.

What was your hardest essay to write?

It's about my worst day as a mom. Something happened with my kids that was an accident but it was my fault, and I had a really hard time forgiving myself.

What are your favorite kid-friendly spots in Sacramento?

We love ArtBeast in Midtown. There are dress-up clothes and make-believe downstairs; the middle floor has paints and markers; upstairs is blocks and Legos. The California State Railroad Museum has a ton of train tables on the top floor, and my boys happily play for hours. I would love for someone to start a coworking place for moms. It could have child care on one side and workspace on one side—and a gym upstairs! Wouldn't that be awesome? You could charge me whatever. I'd happily pay it.—*LeeAnne Jones*



busk

verb : TO PERFORM FOR MONEY AS A SINGER OR STROLLING ENTERTAINER IN PUBLIC PLACES.

This word, originally British, is on the tips of locals' tongues these days as the Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission has created an ad hoc committee to explore ways to bring busking—and its accompanying energy—to the city. While there is not a "no busking" ordinance in Sacramento, a whole host of other rules and regs interfere with street entertainers' ability to work hassle-free.