



## Meet-A-Mom-Monday: Jamie Sztoser and Marissa Klein The Dreamcatchers

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**This week we have TWO Meet-A-Moms, Jamie Sztoser and Marissa Klein, The Dreamcatchers, Choice Associates, and for today Chairs of CBI Holiday Boutique. Jamie and Marissa are sisters, raising their children together and living in Fair Haven, and if you don't know about The Dreamcatchers Podcast have a listen on Apple today. These women have so many accomplishments and truly poured their hearts into this week's interview. Read more below to find out about how these ladies made their dreams come true by moving to Monmouth County, their many ventures, and more.**

### **Where are you from originally and how long have you lived in town?**

We grew up in a small town in northern Bergen County called Harrington Park – and when we say small, we mean like no traffic light, K-8 elementary school small. Marissa went south for college and attended the University of Richmond and Jamie graduated the University of Michigan (GO BLUE) a few years later. We both headed back to NYC and spent many years living the city life before spending 8 years raising littles in Hoboken. We did the same building(s) in the city and then lived in the same complex in Hoboken – the Shipyard. And then, we learned about Fair Haven. You could say we “imprinted” on the Peninsula and living near the beach. We always wanted to find a town that was like where we grew up but closer to the water. We made that dream a reality and moved to FH within 3 days of one another in 2016. A suburban dream come true!

### **Child(ren) and Age(s)?**

**J:** I have the two boys. Sam is 8 and Elliot will be 5 in December! I am the quintessential #boymom.

**M:** I have two girls – Sienna is 11 (12 in December) and Summer is 8. And I am a girl mom all the way.



Photo Credit: Marnie Doherty and Fair Haven Living

**One thing people would be surprised to know about you...**

**J:** I think most people know I am obsessed with dance and music...but most people might not know that I competed my whole life, danced through college, and ALMOST went the professional backup dancer route before tripping into my first corporate job. Now you can just find me pretending to be J. Lo's dancer when I'm in a Tootsie Olan dance class or at a red light.

**M:** I could say SOOOOO many things here, but let's keep it light. I failed backing up straight on my driving test and I still can't do it correctly. Thank goodness for mirrors. And every friend here with a rough driveway knows they need to help me get out. To quote, Glennon, "I can do hard things." However, I can't back up my car, even with technology.



### **Anyone special you'd like to thank for helping you through parenthood?**

It's so so so so cliché, but parenting truly takes a village. From our girls in those early days in Hoboken...to our girls here in FH...to our HS and college friends who step in here and there too...we would not survive without them.

**J:** Also, I always say I was a 2nd time mom when I had Sam because I was an aunt first (literally the ONLY thing I have ever done before Marissa). I am so beyond lucky to have my sister and my nieces in my life, as they have taught me literally EVERYTHING about how to do this job.

And lastly, we are better moms (and bosses) because we have such an incredible team at work and at home. We are so lucky to have such loyal employees...our amazing mom so close by, our very involved husbands, both named Dave, who both now work from home...Jamie has her in-laws a close drive away...and we both get to lean on Jamie's incredible caregiver, Jackie.

### **Favorite things to do with your kids?**

**J:** Anyone who knows my husband and I well knows that we are always looking for a fun activity to do with the kids – or a new meal we can take them to. Sometimes, I'll admit, it's a selfish need to get out of the house so they aren't just sitting on devices all day. Nonetheless, some of my favorite places we have visited in the past few weeks are (in no particular order): Oak Hill Farms in Middletown (get the caramel); Allaire Park (go see the dinosaurs); Cape May for a day trip (lunch at The Blue Pig then dessert from The Fudge Kitchen!); and obviously the beach every second we can.

**M:** My kids are a bit older now and I am thankful because I am admittedly a more comfortable mom in my own skin than I was back in the day. We are all things beach, music, drives, workouts, food, ice cream, and laughs. We admittedly have so much fun together as a family- and I (other than the crazy moments) have enjoyed them so so so much this year. And yes, I have two girls and we do like to (what have I done) shop and scour beauty finds together. My husband and I have indulged in watching a bunch of Netflix with Sienna during the pandemic and as a family, I encourage watching some of the best movies from the 80s and 90s- yup! Overboard, Princess Bride, Big. You remember it with love? We watch it here in Fair Haven. And also now realize how inappropriate our childhood tv/media was (EEK! When I showed the girls Whos the Boss this year? LOL!). I also read with the girls a lot. Right now, we are just warming up with *Little Women*.



**Are you involved in a business venture, a local organization, a creative endeavor, or in the corporate world? Please share!**

**J:** Marissa and I run a division of our family's staffing firm, [Choice Associates](#), where we have built a brand around helping others and good energy. Driven by our entrepreneurial spirit, we both also have several successful side-hustles and pride ourselves on inspiring others to chase their dreams. In 2018, we launched [the dreamcatchers podcast](#) (available on Apple), to raise our voices and reach a larger audience as career experts and motivational speakers. In Spring 2020, we introduced [the dreamcatchers web](#), an inclusive professional membership network dedicated to cultivating community and providing content about career, inspiration + making magic.

I am also the Director of Operations for Tootsie Olan Productions, a NYC-based dance and yoga brand, and consult for POE, a NJ-based yoga, dance and barre studio. Additionally, I serve on the executive board of the Fair Haven PTA. Marissa wrote 2 children's books about chasing dreams (The Dream Big Academy series) and does various forms of programming for local schools, talking to students about what they want to be when they grow up.

In addition to being very active in the community and the classroom, Marissa and I also conceptualized and co-chair several notable local events, including our annual [We're Going Streiking for Breast Cancer](#) fundraiser (we just held our 8th one at Salon 685 in Shrewsbury!). We also recently entered a partnership with two co-working spaces, Luminary in NYC and Bell Works here in Holmdel, NJ, to create content and networking opportunities for their members and communities. We have both moderated several panels and find great joy in speaking to audiences both large and small about career, inspiring others to #leadwithlight.

**M:** One of our favorite passion projects is the annual Holiday Shopping Boutique at our temple, Congregation B'nai Israel. This year's event (or 4th!) is HAPPENING NOW virtually – check it out here: [www.cbiholidayboutique.com](http://www.cbiholidayboutique.com)! Many moons ago in a long ago life prior to social media and children, I had a successful side hustle called RissyLyn (my nickname). I made custom-made luxury picture frames for baby and bridal and did pop-up shops, events, sold to stores, and got a ton of press. RissyLyn enjoyed its moment before DM, ecomm, and even Etsy. Literally everything social media happened right after I decided to go into staffing and/or staffing decided to take me from the side hustle. I digress! I have always loved & supported small business and shopping local artisans – I love getting lost in antique centers or flea markets, craft fairs and the like.

When I moved down here, I could not believe there was not a destination holiday annual event anywhere that had elevated brands, vendors, and NYC energy. Whoops – you can guess what happened. I couldn't quiet the voices...and four years later we are in the midst of the annual event and this year we are doing it virtually. 2020 was not going to stop us, certainly because there has not been a more important time to shop small and support local. Check out the site and follow on Instagram (@cbiholidayboutique), as we have 32+ vendors and some incredible prize-driven contests happening to bring joy this holiday season in a socially-distant and safe way.

Jamie is my favorite partner in crime- I have big and crazy ideas and she meets me there and makes them all sparkle. I am really proud of the impact this event has made on our community and the proceeds raise money for our preschool and Hebrew school. The energy, as you can imagine, is priceless.

**How has this community been instrumental in getting you to where you are now?**

We have always been very NYC-focused with our businesses...but also had a strong desire to be instrumental and influential in our local communities. As you can tell by our bio, we like to be as INVOLVED as possible. We LOVE this town and area and have been much more focused as of late on getting our name out there. We love following along with platforms like The Monmouth Moms to keep us connected and inspired. The pandemic has been such a blessing for us, as it allowed us to launch our networking community and continue our podcast from the comfort of

home (thanks to our partners at A Shared Universe!), but also touch so many local amazing businesses.



### **What is your favorite restaurant in Monmouth County?**

**J:** This is SO hard. Can I do different ones for different meals?! For breakfast, I'd have to say In Between Café, Kitchen Witch, or Over Easy Kitchen. I'm a sucker for really good bacon. For lunch, I'll go with Seed to Sprout – buffalo chickpea salad for LIFE. And for dinner, I'd say that our fave family meal is always good old-fashioned Italian. For that, I'd say it's a tie between Patricia's of Holmdel (two shout outs for Frankie Brusco!) and Patrizia's of Red Bank (IYKYK about their birthday song!). We are also huge fans of Vic Rallo's restaurants, partially because they are delish but partially because they are a Michigan family too – GO BLUE! (Surf, Birravino, and Undici). OH. And of course, YUM!

**M:** Same as above mostly...but the Kays LOVE Ocean Café, Val's, and Edie's Luncheonette (local haunts – we can't help it!). Angelica's is special too. I may have to say that our hands down favorite establishment is Rook. My name is Marissa New Orleans Kay. Nice to meet you.

### **What is your favorite activity to do with your child(ren) in Monmouth County?**

We are in agreement here – there is NOTHING like being able to go to the beach, just because, at any time of the day, on any day of the year. Nothing resets the soul like sand and salt water. You can find us at our beach club (Driftwood) during the summer, and at Sea Bright Public for the remaining months of the year.

### **What are your Mom Goals?**

**J:** Here's my truth – I always knew I wanted to be mom, but I wasn't one of those little girls who dreamed of the day she was one. Now that I'm here, with my 2 kids, in the suburbs, running multiple businesses and events on a regular basis, I can say with certainty – my only goal is to just KEEP MY \$H\*T TOGETHER (can I say that?!). We are all just doing the best we can. And that's all we can do. Oh, and raise responsible and respectful boys, of course. NBD.

**M:** I look at both of my girls and I truly and equally wish to be them when I grow up. Summer is light, silly, kind, and magnetic. Sienna is elegant, serious, strong, and genuine. I hope to be a good role model for them as I have delicately “balanced it all” while raising them. We dream big, we never give up, and we aim to be kind, graceful and empathetic. I want them to truly feel that they can do anything. I want them to remember their roots and to be humble and considerate. Lofty and powerful mom goals...and sometimes, there are many days that I am happy to just have taken a shower. (And mostly I pray that they don't describe me and tequila in the same sentence more often than not?)