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## KANSAS MOMS WORK TO TAKE BACK MOTHERS DAY

A group of Overland Park Kansas moms is working to “take back Mothers Day” as it was originally intended 139 years ago. “We want our holiday celebrated the way it was created by Julia Ward Howe in 1870”, says Sara Sautter, founder of the group known as Julia’s Voice. “This is our day to stand for peace with our children and our mothers, a day to teach our children the importance of working toward a peaceful world”.

This will be the second year for the gathering in front of the Oak Park Mall on Mothers Day. “We were really struck by how last year’s event turned into a multi-generational, educational experience as mothers and children of all ages learned the origins of the holiday,” said organizer Elizabeth Barker. “The level of participation last year really showed that mothers want peace much more than they want flowers or brunch.”

With nearly 500 in attendance last year, the group plans to build on momentum to reclaim the Mothers Day holiday. Many who came to the gathering in 2008 had no idea that Mothers Day had originally been designed as a day to work for peace. They quickly learned about and then embraced the “new” sentiment.

With President Obama pledging to remove troops from Iraq in the next year, the group believes a focus on peace is more important than ever.

“We stand for peacemaking in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, in Mexico and in our own Kansas City neighborhoods”, said Kay Heley, a member of the group. “Mothers want peace for the children and our goal is to draw support for making peace where ever there is conflict that endangers our children.”

“A day when mothers and others teach and work for peace truly honors motherhood – all mothers want a peaceful world for their children” added Sautter. “War, conflict and crime is not something that mothers ever want for their children”.

Julia Ward Howe, author of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, suffragette and activist originally created the day for women – then without a vote or a voice - to speak out against war and promote peace. The holiday was later altered into the gift-giving holiday we now observe by the businessman and merchant John Wannamaker and Anna Jarvis in the early 1900s, according to Sautter.

The gathering will take place in front of the Oak Park Mall at Quivera and 95<sup>th</sup> Street from 3:00-4:00 on Sunday, May 10.



Mother and daughter (far right) Wendy and Lanny Sangster join other Overland Park mothers at the 2008 event which attracted 500 participants.



Overland Park grandmother (left) Sue Hamilton and mothers Jean Groth and Susan Wylie stand for peace at the 2008 event which attracted 500 participants.

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