

Real moms give crash courses on kids

Ottawa women are heading up two new Life Network series this fall devoted to the most hectic job on earth: Being a mom.

And former Rogers Daytime host Catherine Marion and actress Nicole Oliver know exactly what they're talking about.

Marion was just months into her first television job at Daytime last year when she was tapped to co-host Life's new daily series *The Mom Show*.

"I thought I'd be at Rogers for awhile then we'd see, maybe when my kids got older we'd see, maybe I could go back to teaching ..." said Marion. "But I never in a million years ... expected something like this."

The former local model had a brief stint teaching primary school before she had four children in as many years. She

credits accountant hubby Michel for pitching in with their daughter, son and twins, now 10, eight and six, so she could do *The Mom Show*. The producers film six episodes a week during a 10-week shoot. That schedule has Marion flying to Toronto Sundays after dinner and returning home Wednesday nights until early next month.

The daily daytime parenting show, which she co-hosts with Laurie Gelman, collects a panel of experts to offer tips and advice about everything from parenting to marriage to fashion.

"I love that we have moms and kids that are there ... no matter who we are talking to so they can jump in and say 'in my house —'" said Marion. "It's totally interactive."

Ottawa native turned Vancouver resident Oliver helms the other new show, *Crash Test*



'There's this old-fashioned perception about mom. About how easy it should be and is'

— Nicole Oliver
host of *Crash Test Mommy*



File photo

LAURIE GELMAN, left and Catherine Marion host *The Mom Show*, new on the Life Network beginning Monday at 11 a.m.

Mommy. The show is a fun, weekly look at what happens when friends or family step in to a tough role often taken for granted.

"*Crash Test Mommy* says things like, 'If they were my kids they wouldn't behave that way' or 'I could do a better job,'" said Oliver.

curb complaining about a lacklustre sex life or messy house or late dinners, said Oliver.

As a mom to sons who are two and six months, Oliver gets a kick out of watching candidates flounder.

"There's this old-fashioned, if I could say kind of '50s, June Cleaver perception about the mom. About how easy it should be and is," she said. "Watching it, it's gleeful and fun. As a mom it's a lot validating. People are struggling."

Oliver left Ottawa shortly before graduating from Lisgar Collegiate when her family moved to Toronto. After finishing York University theatre school, she headed for L.A. and spent four years on the David Caradine show *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues*.

She eventually moved to Vancouver, married a music composer and started her family. Oliver wasn't sure she'd be able to land a television gig so soon after delivering her second son.

"I was nine weeks post-partum at that point," said Oliver. "They said, 'Yeah that's what they were looking for.'"

The Mom Show premieres Monday at 11 a.m. *Crash Test Mommy* premieres Thursday at 8 p.m.