

# Pioneer Local Article:

## Mommy on a Shoestring: Solving problems leads to thriving businesses

By BETH ENGELMAN MOMMY ON A SHOESTRING May 25, 2011 2:22PM

Necessity might be the mother of invention, but for these mompreneurs, solving a problem was the inspiration behind their thriving businesses.

### **My child has lice!**

Tami Levy and Angie Donnenberg know a thing or two about lice. A few years ago the moms teamed up to tackle their children's lice outbreak with the zeal of two linebackers. Together they experimented with different products, procedures and processes until every nit was gone, never to return again. The moms' determination didn't stop there. They decided to start a service business where they could put their experience and expertise to good use, making the lice removal system easier for everyone (except the lice). Quickly word spread and demand rose, and the business partners decided to package the system.

Nowadays, The Lice Detectives ([www.licedetectives.com](http://www.licedetectives.com)) offer a line of products including repellent spray and shampoos.

### **Ouch! These swim goggles pull my hair.**

From the department of "Why didn't anyone think of this before," comes Gogglesmate, ([www.gogglesmate.com](http://www.gogglesmate.com)), a neoprene goggle-strap that protects hair

from getting tangled and pulled when kids wear swim goggles. The product, invented by Karen Tobey, was born out of sheer frustration after she scoured department store after department store looking for goggles that didn't pull on her kids' hair. Realizing that there was nothing on the market that fit her needs, Karen bought some fabric, borrowed a sewing machine and made a few samples.

Soon other mothers were asking Karen about her kids' cute strap covers and Gogglesmate was born. The company now sells a number of different designs and patterns and has even started making goggles with neoprene straps built in.

### **Floppy holiday cards and photographs**

Glenview residents David and Sonia Kim love getting holiday cards, especially the ones that include photos of their friends and children. The problem? Most holiday cards are hard to display because they flop over and need to be propped against a wall.

"If only we could make an inexpensive stand for each card," thought Sonia.

Her husband, David, agreed, so two years and many prototypes later, Photogator ([www.photogatorstand.com](http://www.photogatorstand.com)) was launched. Photogator stands are now used for a variety of tasks including displaying artwork, photos and even recipes.

### **Stay-at-home mom**

Like many moms, Wendy Freimuth wanted the flexibility of being home for her children, while pursuing a fulfilling career. Before having kids, Freimuth was a successful vice president at Goldman Sachs, but knew the corporate position lacked the flexibility she desired once she became a mom.

Freimuth looked at some "work at home" options but none of them fit her interests and expertise. Not to be defeated, Freimuth decided to blaze her own trail, creating a niche business that fit her unique skill set.

Friemuth's business, Daily Money Matters, offers seniors assistance with their day-to-day financial issues. Word of mouth and an excellent work ethic have built up Freimuth's business, which has expanded to include helping busy professionals. For more information about Daily Money matters contact Wendy at [wendy.freimuth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wendy.freimuth@sbcglobal.net).

### **Toy that inspires creativity**

When Leah Hamilton offered to spearhead a baby shower for her son's first-grade teacher, she never imagined it would lead to starting a toy company ([www.be-blocks.com](http://www.be-blocks.com)). Hamilton wanted to present the beloved teacher with a meaningful gift from the class.

Her idea? Create a set of wooden blocks designed by the children. Hamilton bought a bunch of blocks and had the kids decorate each one in their own, unique way.

The result? A set of wild and wonderful blocks the teacher would cherish. Hamilton knew she was on to something, so she started to do some research including talking to industry experts and eco-friendly designers and soon enough her "dream toy" became a reality.

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