

Mom makes impression

Momprenuer Debbie Cornelius literally hands it to her kids for sparking her thriving stay-at-home business, Wee Piggies & Paws, which creates everlasting molded impressions of your little ones' tiny hands and feet.

Five years ago, Cornelius wanted to capture the her five-month-old daughter's hand and footprints as a sentimental Father's Day gift for her husband.

After purchasing a string of moulding kits, Cornelius wound up dry in terms of satisfactory results. So, Cornelius rolled up her sleeves and started to experiment with her own hypoallergenic ingredients.

After much trial and error, she delivered her masterpiece, an oak-framed shadow box complete with a 3-D moulded set of baby prints and a time-cherished baby picture.

The box caught the attention of friends, who were eager to broadcast Cornelius' newfound talent. Customers from all over Ontario poured into her Niagara Falls home, and a year later, the former sales and marketing executive found her new career.

But the good news didn't stop there. With the support of her husband, Blake, and a team of legal experts and advisors, Cornelius heeded the call from two Mississauga clients to franchise her outfit.

Within 18 months, Cornelius helped 30 mothers from across the country start their own franchises, which are now available for \$12,000.

"I get tremendous satisfaction from not only being able to stay at home to be with my children all day,

who's HOT

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBBIE CORNELIUS

NAME DEBBIE CORNELIUS WITH DAUGHTERS LAURA (LEFT) AND KATHERINE |
OCCUPATION MOMPREENUR/ FRANCHISER

but also from helping other moms discover the same dream of working from home," says Cornelius.

Nol Claudio, a North Toronto franchisee, is one of those moms. The former doctor from the Philippines has been a Wee Piggies mompreneur for three years, and enjoys the flexibility it affords her and her six-year-old daughter.

"I am loving it. Most of my business comes from word of mouth," says Claudio, who's aligned herself with a baby photographer, clothing store and ultrasound clinic to spur business.

Wee Piggies has since expanded to

51 franchises in Canada along with nearly 20 distributorships in the U.S., U.K. and Mexico.

In addition to shadow boxes, Wee Piggies offers a variety of hand and foot-printed ornaments and shoe-bronzing mementos. Trophy-like Life-Cast moulds, which, for example, can capture the clutch of a parent's hand with his baby's, is another popular item.

Christmas shoppers & prospective franchisees can log onto www.weepiggies.com for more information.

And yes, pet paws can also be preserved.