

A treasured keepsake: castings by Wee Piggies & Paws



We all know that babies grow up in the blink of an eye. At Wee Piggies & Paws, Nadine Howard aims to immortalize this cherished and all-too-fleeting stage of life with unique handmade mementos: detailed LifeCasts of babies' hands and feet. It's affordable, and the most personal gift you could find for a loved one.

"You can buy relatives any kind of present, but the regular socks and ties get a little bit monotonous," said Howard. "These are completely personalized and are very special."

Customers have several products to choose from. A popular one is the shadow box – a deep frame with openings for little hands and feet and an accompanying photograph. The shadow boxes are completely customizable to accommodate pairs of hands or feet in varying sizes.

A hanging ornament is striking – and at \$25.00 for a hand or foot and \$35.00 for both, it makes a very affordable Christmas present. The ornaments are perfect to hang on a tree or hearth, and can be personalized with an inscription.

LifeCast statues mounted on granite are another popular choice for generational representation – with great-grandmother's, grandmother's, mother's and daughter's hands – or celebration.

"I have a lot of customers having statues made for an

engagement or an anniversary," said Howard. "It's perfectly safe for rings. The molding product I use shows so much detail – so every little diamond will show up."

Though hands and feet are the most popular choices, Wee Piggies & Paws can create casts of many other things – baby bellybuttons and bums, lips – as a kiss for Valentine's Day – and even pet's paws.

"For some people, their dogs are their babies – so the paws make a very special ornament," said Howard.

The casting process is simple, clean and fast. The molding compound is completely skin, fur and jewelry safe. Customers can expect to spend anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour having a cast made. The cast comes away clean, so no cleanup is required.

Once the cast has been made, the finished product will be ready within four to five weeks.

Howard bought the Wee Piggies & Paws franchise in May of 2004 and operates it out of her home. This time of year, on average she creates casts for up to eight customers a day.

She finds running a home business rewarding because it allows her to spend more time with her children Ashley, 8 and Braden, 6.

"I was working so many hours before, and traveling a lot. I missed my kids," said Howard. "I was determined to find a business that I could do from home – something that would allow me to be there for them."



Wee Piggies & Paws®

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