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Meet Alice

Earlier this year, eight-year-old Alice launched a lighthearted business, Frou Frou Flip Flops (www.froufrouflipflops.com) with a serious mission - helping to raise money for victims of the December 2004 tsunami.

Now, after four months and 50 pairs of flip-flops sold, Alice plans to donate part of future proceeds to victims of Hurricane Katrina, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

From her home in Florida, Alice creates custom-made, fanciful flip-flops covered with ribbons, buttons and more, that she and her mom market as being "perfect for pedicures" or PJ parties. Alice's mom, Raffi Darrow, is also an entrepreneur - she supports her family of four through R-Design (www.rdesignonline.com), a graphic design and web design company.

Where did you come up with the idea to start Frou Frou Flip Flops?

Alice: "I started Frou Frou Flip Flops to raise money for charity, for the victims of the tsunami. I wanted to do a lemonade stand, but my mom didn't think that would work, so I started making flip-flops. I got the idea from my teacher Mrs. Mulkey after we made them in class for Mother's Day."

What style of Frou Frou Flip Flops are your favorites?

Alice: "They're all kind of different. Some have seashells on them. Some have furry stuff wrapped around them. There's one kind on my Web site that are made with buttons."

Raffi: "They all have colorful ribbons and some have T-shirt scraps. The ones with the buttons are cute - they have lighthouse shapes on the bottoms so that you can make cool-looking footprints in the sand. The first question we ask (when someone places an order via e-mail) is, 'What's your shoe size and what's your favorite color?'"

Raffi: "One woman e-mailed and said, 'My Bunko group is having a wackiest-flip-flops-ever contest. Can you help me?' So we told her to e-mail us pictures of her friends and family. We stuck them on top of her flip-flops and



Alice

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I also wanted to mention that I am having "life altering experience" because of the incubators workshop. It is exactly what I needed. Thank you!

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she won her contest."

Why did you want to donate money to other children?

Alice: "I know they have less money than me, so I like to help them."

How does it feel?

Alice: "Very, very, very good."

How long do you plan to keep making Frou Frou Flip Flops?

Alice: "As long as it stays fun for me, which will probably be a very long time."

Does anyone help you to make the flip-flops?

Alice: "People want to help me, but if I let them, I kinda realize that I'm going to have to pay them. So right now I don't have anyone helping me except my mom. She has to help me cut the ribbons."

What are your dreams for Frou Frou Flip Flops?

Alice: "I want to start getting more orders. I have to start getting more advertisements. Most people find me because they look on the Internet. I hope to make a couple thousand dollars. I hope other people will learn to help others."

Will it be tough to sell flip-flops in the winter? Are you planning holiday flip-flops?

Alice: "I think people might buy flip-flops during the winter as presents. They can wear them on the day of their pedicure so they don't mess up their toenail polish. In Florida, you can wear flip-flops all you want. We'll have holiday flip-flops in red and green, and blue and white."

What's your greatest success? What are you most proud of?

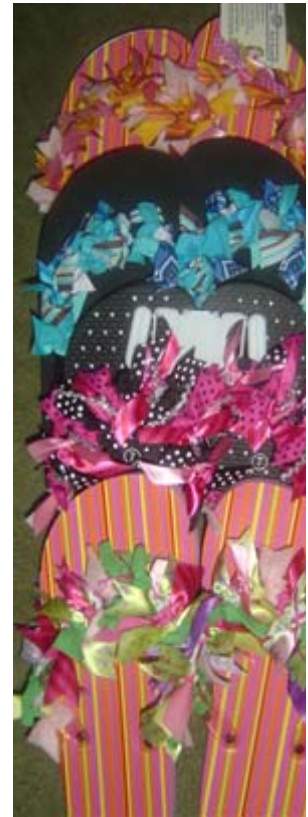
Alice: "Probably today I'm most proud because I sold my flip-flops at Bisque-itz."

Raffi: "It's a pottery and furniture boutique where the first pair was sold in a store instead of on the Web site."

What has been the biggest problem for your business?

Alice: "Probably keeping track of my money."

Raffi: "We had to create an Excel spreadsheet for her. She started this with her birthday money. With \$12 of her own money, she went to Jo-Ann's (fabric and craft



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store) and bought supplies. The first order she sold paid her back for the supplies. This has been a good math lesson for her."

Do you have any advice for other kids who want to start companies or help charities?

Alice: "Don't do it if it's not fun for you. You have to like it. That's why Mommy says, if I don't enjoy it, I should stop because I don't want to spend my life making flip-flops that I don't want to make."

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Alice: "I'd like to be a softball player. I'd like to be the first woman president. That's my first choice. Mommy, if I want to be the first woman president, do I have to learn my multiplication tables?"

How have you helped your daughter get Frou Frou Flip Flops off the ground?

Raffi: "She certainly needed no encouragement. She kept coming to me asking me to make a lemonade stand for the victims of the tsunami. Then she gave me decorated flip-flops for Mother's Day, and I thought, 'Now this is something you can sell.'"

"I help her cut the ribbon, keep a spreadsheet of her expenses and the money coming in. I have to drive her around purchasing supplies and take items to the post office that are ready to be shipped. And I also respond to all of her emails, because I think that's important for a parent to do when your child is only eight."

How has she grown from the business?

Raffi: "It has really perked her self-esteem. Alice has a little sister who is outgoing and friendly and soaks up a lot of the attention. Suddenly Alice is getting the attention now."

She used to come home and say, 'I want to model.' I think it was just because she wanted her face on something, to be recognized. Now she doesn't ask to be a model anymore. Frou Frou Flip Flops fulfilled that for her."

Does Alice get the entrepreneurial spirit from you?

"I have a marketing company - we do graphic design and Web design (www.rdesignonline.com). I started the company about two years ago, and my husband jumped in about a year ago. I needed a programmer and there he was. We serve mostly small- to medium-sized businesses in the Tampa Bay Area."