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## Local mom designs 'positive parenting' product

By: Bitsy Kemper

Keli Berti is a mom who lives in El Dorado Hills. But this insightful 40-year old is also an inventor and owner of My Life Ties, a new company that designs "positive parenting products."

In fact, Berti just made her first retail sale on her first released product. Last Saturday found Berti demonstrating "My Choice Chart" every 30 minutes during a national launch party at Creative Classroom of Folsom.

As a new parent, Berti specifically searched for "something that would help and encourage my family to choose thoughts, words and (re)actions in a conscious, caring, respectful way."

Most of the tools she found were conditional or based on a reward system. While there were lots of parenting books she and husband Bruno, 39, found, "there were no tools out there designed to empower children and enhance their self-esteem." So she created one.

Initially Berti made an interactive chart for herself and her daughter, Elle, now a second grader at Golden Hills Elementary. It worked well and "helped me stay on track as a parent."

She had no intention of going any further with the idea. But then other moms would come over, see the chart, and ask her to make one for them. It got to the point she realized she had something worthwhile.

Berti fine-tuned My Choice Chart over a four-year period with feedback from focus groups in the area, including local parents/grandparents, teachers, educational store owners, child psychologists, and parenting mentor Jane Nelsen Ed.D., best selling author of the Positive Discipline parenting series.

"I had two years of manufacturing experience. I made some mistakes but I had some friends that helped me along the way," explained Berti.

The final product, for children age 4 and up, has about 100 words such as "kindness" and "thankfulness." Kids get to add a star to the magnetic board each time they are kind or thankful, for example.

Families choose a "celebration activity, such as playing a board game or holding a family Karaoke night at the end of each week.



Keli Berti shares the story of the development of "My Choice Chart" with visitors on Saturday at the Creative Classroom in Folsom. Robert Scott/The Telegraph

"The numbers of stars aren't important, and the emphasis isn't on the reward. The focus is on personal growth," she explained. "Over time the child realizes they are the creator of their own day."

Berti made some sales off her web site, <http://www.mylifeties.com/>, over the past few months. But now that her first shipment of 2,000 units is in, she's officially on store shelves.

She's starting out locally with plans to grow nationally, going to tradeshowes and looking at national retail markets.

There are several prototypes for future products in the works, too. "I look forward to offering more family fun support tools in the near future," concludes Berti.

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