

- Contact Us
- Photo Reprints
- Malden Weather
NOW 12°

Homepage

It's a (sudsy) family affair

By Rich Tenorio/malden@onc.com
Thu Feb 28, 2008, 03:35 PM EST

Tools: E-Mail Print Comments Share

MALDEN - Malden resident Ellen Zagorsky Goldberg has four business partners, and she didn't have to go too far to find them.

Zagorsky Goldberg and her daughters - Batsheva, 12, Chana, 10, Penina B., 5, and Ilana, 20 months - have combined to create a soap-making business from one room in their West Side home.

Their four-year-old business, called "4 Sisters Soaps," creates many different types of soaps, ranging in size from half an ounce to more than five ounces.

Among their offerings are heart-shaped Valentine's Day soaps, which Zagorsky Goldberg and her daughters have been busy making the past few weeks - including in "school sets," which are 15 individually-wrapped soaps with personalized labels, plus a jumbo heart for the teacher with his or her name hand-painted on it.

"It's fun, but really challenging," said Zagorsky Goldberg, who had worked as a registered nurse and freelance writer before putting her energies into 4 Sisters Soaps. "It gives new ways of interacting with the kids. It's interesting and great, and I love that the family can work together."

The family also has a Web site for their brand:
www.4sisterssoaps.com.

Zagorsky Goldberg's husband, Sam, is her business adviser, but this is largely an enterprise run by herself and her daughters.

"I see myself, and them, being challenged," Zagorsky Goldberg said.

Nan Langowitz, a Babson College professor who has served as the founding director of the college's Center for Women's Leadership, said that start-up businesses offer stay-at-home entrepreneurs the benefit of autonomy.

"Those who choose to start businesses are typically driven by a desire for autonomy and personal achievement," Langowitz said, in an e-mail interview. "So, as founders, they definitely get autonomy. And with it, that means they can work any 80 hours they want."

The business began when Chana's great-aunt Paula gave her a soap kit capable of helping its owners craft creations of many different shapes.

"It came with a soap base," Chana said. "You wait a little bit, and it comes out as a soap. We have a lot. Stars, ducks, bracelets..."

The sisters' first effort was a yellow teddy bear that they keep in its foam container on Chana's dresser.

Today, their mother says that they can make "probably close to 100 different soaps."

What began as a family pastime took a step toward becoming a business when Zagorsky Goldberg's sister, Debra Agliano, a Web site designer, made her nieces their own site. The project was originally named 3 Sisters Soaps because Ilana wasn't born yet.

"We sent an e-mail out," Zagorsky Goldberg said. "We forwarded it to people."

Regarding their first year as a company, she said, "I think we got a lot of word-of-mouth ... people ordered birthday soaps. They ordered three or four a month ... I think it was the power of the Internet."

"It's very creative, very nice," said neighbor Richard Garcia, a 4 Sisters customer. "I can't bear to use them as real soap."

Clients today include the Melrose Y, which used soaps as gifts for its female gymnasts at their farewell party last year. There was also the woman in New York who requested 60 soaps for the children, teachers, doctors and coaches at her daughter's school last December.

"The principal of her daughter's school wanted to tour our factory," Zagorsky Goldberg said.

The business has been thriving, and adapting as the family changes. Langowitz said home-based business often must switch gears to work around evolving schedules and demands.

"Starting up slowly is often the way entrepreneurs who are home with kids navigate that time management challenge," Langowitz said. "(They) may set goals to simply replace income from a more traditional job at the beginning of the venture, and then plan to grow their financial aspirations once they get the business off the ground and their kids are growing and need less focused attention."



By Ian Hurley/Staff
"4 Sisters Soaps," started by the Goldberg family of Malden, offers its customers a wide range of handmade boutique soaps...

Related Photos



WickedLocal.com

This Wicked Local site sponsored by:



However, what seems to keep 4 Sisters Soaps blossoming is that it offers something for mother and daughters alike.

Each sister brings something different to the business. Batsheva likes the marketing aspect; with Chana, she also brainstorms designs. Chana brings artistic talents to the creation process, while Penina helps add extra flair to the final product. Ilana, meanwhile, has inspired a line of baby-themed soaps.

For Zagorsky Goldberg, it has allowed her to keep working after she decided to stop freelance writing after eight years.

"Something had to go," she said. "We kept the soap ... I said, 'We can do this as a business.' It's different, it's fun. We need it."

Comments (0)

Leave a Comment:

NAME

COMMENT

Participation in online discussion is subject to our [Terms of Use](#). By commenting, you agree to be bound by these terms.

Add Comment

Wicked Local Advertising

Visit the Wicked Local Marketing Center to help you reach thousands of local consumers. Creating custom ads is easy as 1, 2, 3, simply click here to begin

Wicked Local Favorites!

Visit Wicked Local Favorites and check out our Reader's Choice Awards.

www.WickedLocalFavorites.com

COOLMAX CYCLING SOCKS

SAVE 75% Discount CYCLING Brand-Name Apparel & pairs COOLMAX SOCKS for \$18.99! BLOWOUT PRICES AT LONGSCYCLE.COM

Malden Observer, 57 High Street, Medford, Massachusetts 02155

[Daily News Transcript](#) • [Daily News Tribune](#) • [The Enterprise](#) • [The Herald News](#) • [MetroWest Daily News](#) • [Milford Daily News](#) • [Patriot Ledger](#) • [Taunton Gazette](#)

[About](#) | [Advertiser Info](#) | [Contact](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Terms of Use](#)

Copyright 2006-2007 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.

WICKED LOCAL

Original content available for non-commercial use under a Creative Commons license, except where noted.



WEB BROWSING REDEFINED FIREFOX