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Rolling up her sleeves ... literally

GRETCHEN METZ, Staff Writer

Posted: Tuesday, 12/23/08 12:01 am
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Staff photos by Amy Dragoo Barbara Doran pulls on her KitchenKuffs in her East Goshen kitchen.



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EAST GOSHEN -- Sweatshirt sleeves are the worst. Sweater sleeves aren't much better.

Push them up, they slide down. It is as if they were designed to flop into dishwasher, get caught on the pot handle on the stove or slip into the turkey during Thanksgiving morning prep.

One day last spring, advertising executive Barbara Doran had enough and came up with the idea for KitchenKuffs.

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As the name implies, KitchenKuffs are cuffs with a circle of elastic that keep a person's sleeves pushed up and out of the way while they are cooking or doing the dishes..

"I had the idea in March and it evolved from that point," said Doran, who is president of Doran & Forgacs, a direct marketing company, also based in East Goshen.

So Doran designed the cuffs, bought the material and stitched them up. She worked with them, did some modifications, made some that were lined, some that were not. In June, she contacted a patent attorney.

"At the end of the meeting, he said, 'I'm so glad I took the time to meet with you,'" Doran said, adding that he gave her the encouragement she needed to keep going.



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ness, Kurico LLC, which required roughly a \$10,000 investment in the patent alone, Doran said she asked her husband, "are you up for this?"



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"I was afraid if I didn't do it and then saw someone else," Doran said, cocking her head to imply that she would regret not pursuing her dream if she let it slip away.



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The patenting process is involved and expensive, according to Doran.

Before embarking on the new busi

ness, Kurico LLC, which required roughly a \$10,000 investment in the patent alone, Doran said she asked her husband, "are you up for this?"

With her husband's go-ahead, Doran got busy.

"I was afraid if I didn't do it and then saw someone else," Doran said, cocking her head to imply that she would regret not pursuing her dream if she let it slip away.

First she had to determine if there was a patented product similar to KitchenKuffs.

As it turns out, there wasn't so Doran marched on to get a provisional patent. That gives her a year to modify her product before applying for the permanent patent, she explained.

Then she went to Thomas Register, a Web site that connects people with manufacturers, distributors and service providers.

Doran, who acknowledges she is not much of a seamstress, said she realized to sell the product she needed the professional look that a manufacturer would bring to the product.

Doran found a host of possibilities at Thomas Register, managing to whittle her list down to eight before eventually settling on Dallco Industries in York, an 85-year-old sewing and cutting company whose biggest client is the U.S. military.

The cuffs, made with cotton material, come in three prints: cherries, peaches, and red, white and green peppermints. There is an option of lined (\$19.95) or unlined (\$16.95) in two sizes.

The price point is determined by the manufacturing costs, the 53-yr old entrepreneur said.

She started out with a focus on women ages 35 to 65 who were most likely to do the household cooking. With that in mind, she selected fabrics that were skewed to feminine tastes.

Once in hand, she headed for craft fairs to sell her product and get direct feedback.

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To her surprise, she found a significant number of men also enjoy cooking. Now she is considering a more neutral pattern, something that would be also be accepted in a secondary market, the culinary field.

Doran includes a survey with the cuffs. If the buyer takes the survey, she gives them a \$2 discount. She wants to know if the buyer wants the product made in the U.S., whether it's a good value, whether it's a gift, and demographic questions such as gender and age.

The surveys, Doran said, help her fine tune the cuffs, as well as determine the demographic she should target.

-- On the Web: www.kitchenkuffs.com

-- To contact staff writer Gretchen Metz, send an e-mail to gmetz@dailylocal.com.

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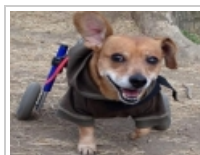
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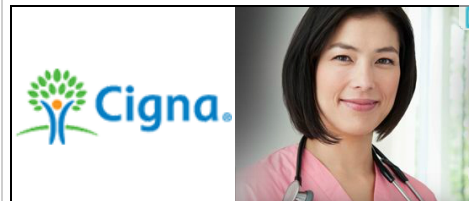
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