

'Playful,' user-friendly kit arises out of need

Bee sting leads mother to create first-aid bag for everyone

Three years ago, Richelle Nassos' oldest son was stung by a bee during a family outing. As the tot's finger began to swell and tears poured down his cheeks, Nassos felt panic mount.

"I realized I felt helpless," the northeast Phoenix resident said. "I wished I had had a first-aid kit close at hand with a simple diagram that would have shown me what to do."

The experience sent Nassos on a search to create a first-aid kit that was user-friendly and non-threatening. Late last year, after a two-year odyssey of research, testing and development, Nassos launched the Medibag, a colorful red-and-white kit designed for use in the home and on the road.

"My goal was simple. It was to make first aid fearless for children and educational for everyone," Nassos said.

The kit contains traditional first-aid products such as bandages, gauze, a thermometer and topical ointments, as well as a home safety CD created by Nassos and her husband, Pete.

So far, more than 1,000 units have been sold in Arizona and six other states, with a national launch planned within the next several months.

Nassos said a number of the kits are being purchased for birthday, shower and housewarming gifts.

"So many parents don't have a current first-aid kit in their home," she said. "The Medibag is a great way to provide them with the essentials."

Educating customers and the public about safety is part of the company mission. Each year, hospital emergency rooms treat an average of 3.4 million children under age 15, with more than half of the visits involving children under the age of 9. In addition, eight out of 10 adults are not CPR-certified, according to Nassos.

"That's a scary statistic," she said.

The Nassoses launched a Web site, www.me4kids.com, that provides information on product recalls and links to partner firms that provide online CPR training and medical identification services.

Judy Wadley of the Kid to Kid store in Paradise Valley decided to stock the first-aid kit because "I knew I would buy it. As a parent, I immediately saw that this was a good product."

Sales of the Medibag have been brisk, Wadley said.

"It's appealed to kids and parents," she said. "The bag has that playful feel to it."

The \$29.99 bag "is great for summertime, especially poolside and for picnics," she said. "It's nice to know you have something on hand; you never know what's going to happen."

"I fell in love with this bag," said Marla Worth, a physical therapist and mother of three who received a bag as a gift. Worth now sells the bags for Nassos to mothers clubs and organizations in the Valley.

"I knew it was so worthwhile that I called my friends to tell them about it," she said. "I sold 10 in the first 24 hours."

"I had a couple of first-aid kits at home, but nothing as cute and fun as this. My kids think it's awesome, too. The other day I was at the park and my daughter cut her finger on the monkey bars. She ran over to me yelling, 'Mom! I need the Medibag.'"

Medibags available at convention

Medibags will be available at the 110th annual National PTA Convention, June 23-25 at the Phoenix Civic Center. Information: www.pta.org.

For more information about Medibags, go to www.me4kids.com.

Medibags also are available at the Kid to Kid Store of Paradise Valley, 15030 N. Tatum Road, Phoenix. (602) 404-4441.