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A mother's hobby turns into booming consignment business

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Juliana Ruiz helped found Lollipopsh, a company that collects gently used children's items to sell at consignment events. Her children are Daniela, 3, left, Gabriel, 6, and Sofia Jimenez, 4. (Janeris Marte, FPG / August 16, 2011)

CHRISTIANA LILLYcilly@tribune.com
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After the birth of her third child in 2008, Juliana Ruiz of [Pembroke Pines](#) felt she had too much stuff. Her house was overflowing with unneeded children's clothing, toys and items, so she went the route many do to try to get rid of them.

"I had tried to sell on [eBay](#) and I had tried to sell on Craig's List, and I wasn't really getting the results I wanted," Ruiz said.

Teaming up with two friends, the mother started the Lollipopsh Seasonal Consignment Sale. She encouraged other area moms to put up their items for consignment and gave them 60 percent of the sales. The first event was in November 2008 at the Old Davie School Historical Museum. When the following event was triple the success, Lollipopsh moved to the Soref Jewish Community Center in Plantation and has been there ever since.

Each event has a cap of 120 consignors, and it always is filled, Ruiz said. For the next event in September, there are still openings for anyone interested in joining.

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How does the consignment event work?

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What items can you consign?

You can pretty much consign a large array of items. It's easier to say what you can't consign. The only items you can't consign are cribs as of June this year – it's actually illegal to sell any cribs that don't have code requirements. We don't sell used car seats, again, because it's a liability. You never know if a car seat has been in an accident or compromised. Also sippy-cups, used bibs, spoons, Diaper Genies, pacifiers. ... We do consider ourselves to be upscale, [so] we want people to get new items.

What about brands?

We do also have limitations on brands. We just recently started accepting [Target](#) because we realized the quality has improved. Walmart brands, Sears brands and I believe JC Penny brands we don't take. The reason behind all that is because usually the Walmart clothing, as it is beautiful, it doesn't really last as long. We value our reputation [and] we have been able to establish ourselves as a better consignment event. We started off as the only one, and now we have competition.

How has it been working from home while raising your children?

I work from home all the time. I do have a satellite office set up in [Coral Springs](#), a little far from me, but when I need to get into the whole event planning mode, we have all our items there, all our hangers there. It definitely has worked. Originally, when I started with the two friends, it was a little bit easier because we only did one event every six months and the workload was minimal up until we had an event. However, now I'm adding more events. Just in the fall, I have a holiday event coming up in November.

What's next?

I'm actually launching an upscale women's consignment line. It's called Poshicle, the sister store to Lolliposh. Now it's almost what I'd consider a full-time job. ... It was kind of a hobby at first – let's see what we can do with this – but now it's turned into a job. ... I have a lot of flexibility because it's my business.

What do you hope for the next three years for your business?

I'm just hoping to add more events in the Miami area [since] we have had a lot of requests to grow into Miami. We're in Plantation and we've had more requests to come out more west to where I am.

With Poshicle, that's a completely different market. It's the same business model, but it's a completely different concept. This one is more upscale, geared toward women with formal wear and business wear.

Catch Lolliposh's next event

The next Lolliposh consignment event is from Sept. 15 to 17 at the Sorel Jewish Community Center's Levin Gymnasium at 6501 W. Sunrise Blvd. in Plantation. Look below for special dates for consignors and the general public.

Consignor Drop Offs: Sept. 13, 14 and 15

Private Presale: Sept. 15

Volunteers and consignors: 4 to 8 p.m.

New and expectant moms (registration required): 5 to 8 p.m.

Presale pass holders: 6 to 8 p.m.

Open to the Public:

9:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Sept. 16

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 17 (50 percent off select items)

Consignor pick-up: 10 a.m. to noon Sept. 18

Call 954-401-3747, or visit [Lolliposh.com](#) or [Facebook.com/Lolliposh](#).

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