

Kids Haven gives comfort in tough economy

By Julie A. Taylor

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A children's consignment shop in the old Warrenton Borders storefront sells the best brands at 50 to 75 percent less than retail prices, but this sale only lasts until Tuesday — and it won't be back till the fall.

Angela Sain, owner of Kids Haven, watched her aunts start successful businesses. She was inspired, but wanted to remain a stay at home mom.

"I had just had my second daughter and I enjoyed shopping at consignment stores that were there all the time, but I didn't like going in and seeing the same merchandise," said Sain. "It was so expensive to keep clothes on these two kids. I thought, 'There's got to be a better way than this.'"

In the fall of 2001, she ran the first consignment sale, but was unable to cover her expenses.

"We had 36 consignors. I didn't make enough to pay off my loan," she said.

Getting back on the horse she recalls saying, "Well lets try one more sale."

So in the spring of 2002 she tried again.

"Everything doubled—consignors, items. We actually made a little profit!" she said. I was hoping that next one would show improvement and growth, from there it just snowballed."

Her dad and mom started coming down from Pennsylvania for every sale; her dad helping out with the store, and her mom staying home to take care of the kids.

"My dad claims he's the efficiency expert," she said. "He's my IT guy, my go to guy. Always asking 'how can we make it bet-

Store hours

Today: 10:00 AM - 7:00 p.m.

Tax Free Saturday

Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Sunday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

(25 percent off)

Monday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

(50 percent off)

Tuesday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

(75 percent off)

ter, more efficient?" He designed our software program—nobody has it but us," she said.

Her dad, Greg Cope, said he doesn't have much computer background, "I was more self taught—driven by necessity."

His desire to see his daughter's business thrive led him to make some technical decisions.

"Let's bite the bullet and make it truly like a point of sale," said Cope.

Her husband and daughters also help with store related tasks.

"The kids help me at this point. They're old enough they can run the computer system, the cash register," said Sain.

She said she buys all of her kids' clothes through the consignment sale.

"I don't buy retail. I just took the clothes home last night for them that they picked out. All their stuff comes from here too," she said.

Franchising is the latest idea on Sain's horizon. She said it's a logical next step, and is excited to offer their business model and consignment-specific software to neighboring areas.

"I can't tell you how many consignors and shoppers say, 'I shop twice a year, one stop shop,



FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF PHOTO/RANDY LITZINGER

Angela Sain at Kids Haven consignment, currently in the former Borders building in Warrenton.

get everything for my kids that season." Whatever money they make on the consigned items they brought in, that's what they'll spend," Sain said. "We all just keep recycling stuff back through the community."

Not only does the company benefit consignors and shoppers, it also benefits local charities. At the end of the sale, every item is donated to places like Vint Hill Transitional Housing, CareNet Pregnancy Center, and Community Touch.

Over the last four years, more than \$75,000 in items was donated. Her husband even took a trailer full of necessities up to New York after Hurricane Sandy went through.

Sain took her business from 36 consignors to 350 regular consignors. She said the key to her success is "always trying to improve your process. It's essentially trading in what you don't need."

Get a notification on the fall sale by signing up at kids-haven.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

The line when the show first opened stretched all the way to Panera Bread and beyond.