



BRENTWOOD NEWS

HOMEMADE BABY

By Lilli Harris Lee

Many mothers often wonder how long jarred baby food sits on market shelves before making its way into a toddler's tummy. I could accept the longevity of fruits and vegetables but popping open a jar of pureed meat was more of a mystery, best ignored for the sake of a hungry child. Brentwood resident Theresa Edy Kiene had similar thoughts to mine, but she wasn't satisfied with the "ignorance is bliss" approach to feeding times. Instead, Theresa, with her husband Matt, started "Homemade Baby" an organic, preservative-free and kosher line of food for babies.

Theresa explains, "I really wanted to do something that helped moms (who were really, really busy) give their kids super nutritious food."

Theresa was an executive at Lifetime Television when she had her first of three girls and, like most working moms, she didn't want to rely on the convenience of fast food just because she was so busy. The homemade fare she prepared was so popular among her daughters and their friends, she decided to turn it into business. So far there are three categories that resemble the traditional dietary needs of an infant: "So Smooth" which consists of single fruits and vegetables, "Good Mushy" which mixes different foods and flavors (my fifteen-month old son was a fan of "Squapples," a combination of roasted squash and apples) and "Kinda Chunky," for the older, more adventurous palate ("Baby TexMex" anyone?). Parents order off the company's website (www.HomemadeBaby.com) and the food is delivered, anywhere in the country, the very next day.

"It's like Netflix," explains Matt with a smile. "But you don't have to send anything back!"

Headquartered in Culver City, parents are encouraged to bring their little ones in for a tasting, which is what I did with my son Mason, a new fan. But, babies and toddlers aren't the only ones who enjoy eating the concoctions. Theresa says Homemade Baby is a big hit among the sorority set on college campuses! "It's low-calorie, high density nutrition and it's fat free, basically!"

Baby food of this quality doesn't necessarily come cheap which is why the Kienes are donating fifteen percent of all the food they make to poor and homeless families because as Theresa says, "We wanted to make sure that we give the message that good nutrition is for ALL babies..." not just those who can afford the higher cost that comes from being both organic and kosher.

And Theresa doesn't want to stop there. Eventually, she'd like to offer Homemade Baby in markets and possibly as a room-service option in hotels. But, her ultimate goal is to see her product on McMenus across the country. "My dream would be to have Homemade Baby sold in the fast food environment because I see babies eating French fries and it breaks my heart."



A tasting session at Homemade Baby