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Cary mom's inspired invention

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Like many new mothers, Tina Bruce of Cary learned fairly quickly that rearing a newborn can be a less-than-glamorous job. As if the spitting up, dirty diapers and soiled baby clothes weren't enough, she was constantly worried about breast-milk leaks showing up on clothing at inopportune times.

"New moms have enough emotions without adding embarrassment to the list," Bruce says. "I know personally how it feels when you're at the grocery store or in a meeting and, wham, all of a sudden your bra is damp. You wonder, 'OK, when is this going to show, and can I get to safety before it does?'"

Bruce tried bra pads but found them bulky and ill-fitting. So she decided to create her own solution: LilyPadz nursing pads.



experienced.

"I completely loved nursing my children but was just done with lumpy, wet, uncomfortable pads that showed through my tops," she says. "It was embarrassing, and I knew there had to be a better way."

Bruce began experimenting with materials she had on hand: fabric, tape, Band-Aids and the like. After much trial and error, inspiration struck as she used some clear, silicone gel caulk to secure a baby gate in their house.

"Since I studied chemistry, I knew silicone was safe, inert and could be malleable enough to form the right shape for nursing moms," she explains.

She created the silicone pads, using herself as a guinea pig. Finding they worked well on her, she shared them with friends. Pretty soon, she realized there was a demand, and she had the product patented and mass-produced in 2003. Since then, they've grown from being carried in small boutique maternity shops to large nationwide retailers, such as Target.

As the business grows, Bruce just hopes all her hard work will save new mothers some of the headaches she

"There were definitely changes, improvements and tweaks along the way - just as with any other invention - but I'm so thrilled we could arrive at a product that now fills a void and helps real families."

Happenings in the stores

This week brings trunk shows, special events and more. Here's the rundown:

◆ Nordstrom celebrates the re-opening of its Yves Saint Laurent beauty counter with a grand party, today, noon-7 p.m. YSL national makeup artist Dell Ashley and members of the local YSL beauty team will offer makeovers and consultations, and each customer will receive a signature YSL golden mirror with any \$150 YSL purchase. To make an appointment, call 806-3700. Nordstrom is in the Streets at Southpoint, 6910 Fayetteville Road, Suite 500, Durham. www.nordstrom.com.

◆ Colorful gemstones set in delicate gold earrings, necklaces and bracelets make Roberto Coin's jewelry a subtle way to enhance an outfit. A representative from the brand will have new pieces from the collection for a trunk show at Saks Fifth Avenue in Triangle Town Center, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Wednesday. For information or to schedule an appointment, call 792-9100, ext. 5318. Saks Fifth Avenue is at 7700 Old Wake Forest Road, Raleigh.


◆ Foursquare fans can now use the popular social networking tool to save at H&M with their American Express cards. By linking their American Express accounts to their Foursquare profiles, shoppers can get couponless deals from H&M by showing their mobile phones at the checkout counter. Current deals include a spend \$75, get \$10 back offer. For more information, visit www.americanexpress.com. H&M is in Crabtree Valley Mall at 4325 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh. 787-8993, www.hm.com.

Local brand goes national

Dragonfly girlgear, a Chapel Hill-based athletic apparel label for girls ages 8-17, has branched out on the national level, getting picked up by Portland, Ore., retailer Aries Apparel. The retailer, which caters to female athletes, will carry the line's Un-Tee Cami and Un-De Compression Shorts online and in its stores. Dragonfly girlgear also makes other athletic wear such as sports bras and sliders for girls. For more info, visit www.dragonflygirlgear.com.

Send Stylin' news and tips to Jennifer Bringle at jenniferbringle@gmail.com.

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Fashion background reflected in Raleigh woman's restaurant



It's easy to be intimidated at the thought of a meeting with Shannon Wolf. The Raleigh resident has, after all, logged more than 20 seasons watching some of the world's best fashion at New York Fashion Week,

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