

Cool Eating for Kids

TEXAS MAN'S INVENTION HAS A BUILT-IN FAN INSIDE A DISH COVER TO HELP PREVENT BURNED LITTLE TONGUES **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

WHAT'S TOUGHER than a "hangry" toddler? As a mother of two, and a "bubbe" of one, I've seen my share.

Basically, it's "Feed me now. I don't care if the pancakes or sausages are too hot!" Then comes the screaming when he burns his tongue because "I told you so!"

Frisco, Texas' Weldon Barber invented WindBrrrly Buddy to solve this problem. It's a large, child-themed cap resembling a cake dish cover with vents at the bottom lip that fits over a hot dish, and a fan inside to cool the food.

It recently made an appearance on Steve Greenberg's "What the Heck is that?" YouTube game show.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): Had you invented anything before?

Weldon Barber (WB): As a Texas A&M University business alumnus, I always had a particular interest in entrepreneurship. A grown kid at heart, I did open a Small Laser Tag facility before starting my special education teaching and coaching career. I think I have always wanted to help young students find their strides.

EGT: How did the WindBrrrly Buddy concept come about?

WB: This is a very peculiar story. We became a family of six rather fast and suddenly had four little

Weldon Barber shows off WindBrrrly Buddy with family members (front row, from left) Aurora, Ariadne, Artemis; and (back row) Andromeda and his wife, Alissa.

"I remember our youngest daughter, Ariadne, throwing it down for fun and thinking to myself, 'Well, it is certainly durable!'" —WELDON BARBER



ladies to feed dinner. Things can get very hectic and tumultuous, especially during mealtime.

My wife, Alissa, was trying to get all of the meals prepared using whatever means necessary—as hard-working, multi-tasking mothers do every day, all day. I remember asking her way too many questions, and she said something both of us will never forget.

“If you really want to be helpful right now, then you will make something that can cool their food down without me having to blow on food for four kids. I want them to eat without burning their mouths.”

I remember being frozen at that point. My mind started racing. I already teach tactile concepts combined with math and science elements.

Something just clicked. She had just described what would evolve into WindBrrrly Buddy.

After much experimentation, research on convection properties and a childlike usability focus, I knew that this would be a very special project. After I developed a prototype, I located a manufacturer that I had originally seen in D magazine [which covers the Dallas/Fort Worth area].

I talked him into a meeting at Starbucks. This gentleman told me, flat out, that his experienced eye can tell if a product has legs or not—and that most don't. Two minutes later, after I heated a bread loaf and showed him what WindBrrrly could do, he said, “You have something here.”

We were off to the races from there. Those were very exciting times.

EGT: What is the age range for WindBrrrly—and, if sold in the United States, does it comply with the Consumer Product Safety Commission's age-appropriate testing requirements?

WB: WindBrrrly has been certified by Quality Inspection Management (QIMA) and passed all current Consumer Product Safety Commission testing requirements for all children over 2. We, as teachers and parents, have spent a lot of our energy and time making sure WindBrrrly stood out for safety and durability.

I remember our youngest daughter, Ariadne, throwing it down for fun and thinking to myself, “Well, it is certainly durable; she is a rough one.”

EGT: Where are you manufacturing? Any problems with manufacturing or logistical issues?

WB: We have been supported in this area with a wonderful international company out of the Shenzhen Province in China.

A mentor recommended Hansen King because of their quality and reliable customer service. They have been exceptional and really pull for a new product to succeed, which is not easy to find from your manufacturer.

EGT: From where are you selling?

WB: We are selling exclusively on Amazon. It is such an effective platform for getting a product to consumers worldwide with expedience and care. As we expand into retail, we will make sure to nurture our Amazon family and continue to provide WindBrrrly with enthusiasm.

EGT: How long did it take you to develop this product?

Did you need to create many prototypes before you were confident of a working model?

WB: It took around three years to finalize WindBrrrly as you see it today. Our goal was to create something sleek, efficient and long-standing while priced to be accessible to everyone.

Those goals were hard and time consuming, but we and our customers now get the best version of WindBrrrly out of the gate instead of just a first-edition product that needs refining.

EGT: Is WindBrrrly patented? If so, has it been a difficult or costly process?

WB: WindBrrrly is patented, and that process is always costly and tedious. Fortunately, we were able to get our patent granted, and that allowed us to effectively hone in on our unique design. The confidence that we obtained with that type of protection, I believe, was the intended purpose of the United States patent process: to protect hard-working imaginations.



The lid is also an interactive toy for kids.

EGT: Who handles your PR?

WB: We have an Amazon-focused PR/marketing manager who works to maximize and coordinate all of our multi-social branding and latest technology advancements to promote WindBrrrly.



EGT: Will you be adding any products?

WB: Yes, we will be adding a new color for WindBrrrly. Functionally, it works the same, but we want to give our customers an aesthetic color option.

EGT: Can you offer any advice on developing a children's product from idea conception, through to sales and marketing?

WB: Absolutely. First and foremost, you must

find mentors. The process is long and hard but not impossible.

The lesson I had to learn is that the time it takes to completely get the product and logistics completed is long. It is not long to torture you; it is long due to the multitude of problems you must solve if you want to see something from beginning to end that you believe is worth the struggle.

I am a teacher and mentor at heart; I would like to encourage inventors to stay positive, stay focused, and enjoy the process along the way. 🍀

Details: WindBrrrly.net; WindBrrrly@gmail.com

Edith G. Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000 (edietolchin.com/portfolio). She is the author of several books, including "Secrets of Successful Women Inventors" (<https://a.co/d/fAGlvZJ>) and "Secrets of Successful Inventing" (<https://a.co/d/8dafJd6>).



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