



KAZ NOVAK, THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Two in front, from the left, Julie Cole and Tricia Mumby, and behind them, from the left, Cynthia Esp and Julie Ellis Cole, run Mabel's Labels co-operatively.

Hear us roar

## Mabel's Labels make mom's life easier

also 32 and a full-time financial planner, is in charge of finances.

And Cole's 30-year-old aunt, Tricia Mumby, a graphics manager at the University of Waterloo, takes care of organizing brochure/material text and design and website.

For these women, starting the business solved more than just the problem of lost items.

Between the four of them they will soon have nine children, as two are on the way. For Cole, self-employment is particularly valuable as it means that she can stay at home and participate in therapy with her autistic son.

This company was an idea that took time to develop. The partners began brainstorming two years ago, and began production last year.

To get the business off, the women invested \$50,000 in equipment, tools training and advertising. They are equal partners in the newly incorporated company.

Although the technology that keeps Mabel's labels firmly stuck to products is top-secret (the shoe labels are extra-extra sticky), Cole would reveal that they're made in a Hamilton home.

The labels are not a patentable product, but they are protected by trademark and copyright law, said Cole. The labels are personalized with names, nicknames, initials or whatever

you choose. Adding a picture icon helps even pre-reading toddlers to identify their own belongings.

Most of the labels are UV-protected, so they will not fade in the sun. So all those items left outside or in the back window of the family car can still be claimed by the owner.

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Mabel's Labels was created in 2002 with a \$50,000 investment for equipment, training and advertising

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Mabel's Labels are promoted through day-care centres, private nursery schools, gymnastics centres – where kids leave things behind.

In addition to holding fundraisers with schools and day cares, the company uses agents who sell for them.

Products are shipped directly to customers, and can be ordered online at mabel.ca.

For more information, contact Julie Cole at 905-320-4714.