

NOW MOM- PRENEURS

Four New York women who are managing to nurture both family and career

When the going gets tough, moms get going.

Far from assuming the fetal position and allowing the economic crisis to crush them, some local mothers with bright entrepreneurial spirits are determined to seize opportunities and provide for their families.

Four in particular have managed to increase their earning potential without sacrificing any precious time with their kids. How do they do it? Determination, the Internet and a little less sleep, for starters.
Jane Ridley and Leah Chernikoff

PARENTING
THROUGH THE
CRUNCH

4 QUESTIONS FOR ...
a nutrition adviser



RICHARD HARRIS

6 QUESTIONS FOR ... a child model's mom

How did Lee get into modeling?

He followed in the footsteps of Isaac and his sisters, Tatiana, 19, and Nataysha, 18, who have always done musical theater, acting, TV and modeling. He did a catalogue shoot in Oahu when he was just 8 months old and ended up on the cover. He was such a cute baby and loves the camera. He impersonates and he's funny.

Why the move to New York City?

Two years ago, we were visiting Isaac and saw that the agency Willy Kids had an open casting. Lee met the president, Marlene Wallach, and she signed him up. His Polynesian heritage means he has a very unique look.

What type of modeling does Lee do?

A lot of print work for Gap, Benetton and the Children's Place and he's on three TV commercials, for Macy's, Tylenol and Kellogg's. Shoots can last from one hour to eight hours. He earns anything from \$150 an hour for print to thousands for a national commercial which brings in royalties.

How does he attend so-called "go sees" and jobs as well as school?

We homeschool Lee via a DVD-based curriculum. He's a very bright boy in the fourth grade who reads at an eighth-grade level. We bring along my laptop, and he does schoolwork in between his modeling work and after he's done. The flexibility helps a lot, but I keep him very social with activities like soccer and chess.

Any advice for parents of aspiring models?

It has to be as much your child's passion as your own. Too many times I see parents who



THOMAS MONASTER/DAILY NEWS

Kim Au

AGE: In her 40s; lives in midtown

JOB: Chaperone for her 10-year-old son, Lee, a child model

TIME ON THE JOB: Ever since her oldest son, Isaac, now a 29-year-old Broadway actor, started singing and dancing as a tot in the family's native Hawaii.

want it more than their child.

What happens to Lee's earnings?

All monies go into a specific account for his future. Lee wants to be a doctor, so he's saving for medical school. But whenever he does a job, I allow him to take some money out to buy something special, like an electronic or a board game. It's important to teach him the value of money and saving.

Want to get your child into modeling? Check out Wallach's site, www.justaskmarlene.com.

How did you come up with the concept for Tender Shoots Wellness?

Tender Shoots Wellness is a boutique lifestyle practice. I work mostly with expectant and new moms and teach them about nutrition, culinary practice and yoga. I had a background in plant sciences and grew up working in a restaurant. And when I became pregnant, I didn't experience any of the complications that experts assured me I would experience. I didn't have morning sickness, I didn't gain weight — it was only 14 pounds at time of delivery that I gained total, and people asked, "How's that possible?" And I just ate really well, did yoga, I tried to remain stretch-free and practice breathing techniques. I thought, "Wow, there's got to be a way to make this information more accessible to moms in a way that they can feel pampered, empowered, and make comprehensive lifestyle changes."

So your pregnancy inspired your work?

While I was pregnant I had ideas, but my business didn't really coalesce until my son's birth. Having a foundation in nutrition and growing up in a restaurant, I had a hunch of what I was supposed to be eating. I was able to manage cravings, so if I was eating a seaweed salad, I would think, "Why do I want seaweed? I guess I need iodine, and I'm probably looking for some Vitamin B." I could see those correlations. Those are the things I teach expectant mothers. You don't necessarily want ice cream if your body wants calcium.

So if I was an expectant mom, what would you offer me?

I would meet with you, probably come to your home because I believe in people feeling comfortable — and do an hour consultation. People fill out forms — one is about

Latham Thomas

AGE: 28; based in Manhattan

JOB: Founder, Tender Shoots Wellness

TIME ON THE JOB: Tender Shoots officially launched in 2006, but Thomas has been doing the work since 2004.

nutrition, one for yoga, and one is about culinary services. We'd talk about correlations between lifestyle and diet and your goals and a plan to achieve them. We'd meet every other week for about an hour. And I offer prenatal cooking classes called "Bun in the Oven." We make supportive cuisine — like if you're suffering from swelling, or edema, we could create a really nice salad for that. Or if you're experiencing fatigue or anemia, I'll create a menu to help with those common ailments. Some moms I'll keep on as clients after they give birth — they might want to get enough caloric intake to breast-feed but also try to retone the body.

How do you balance being a mom and an entrepreneur?

I sometimes don't know how I do it, but I manage to take my son, Fulani, to school, pick him up and in between, I'm writing menus, I go to clients' homes to cook, and then I teach prenatal food classes around the city as well. And two evenings a week he goes to his dad's house, so I work really late those nights so I can pack in more clients. Every night that we're together we're home by 6, and he helps me cook and goes to bed at 8:30. He loves to cook and always asks if he can help pick out things for my clients.