



Two Moms See the New Color of Beauty as Green

Chemical-free crusade leads women to launch their own company.

Overland Park, KS, November 09, 2007 --([PR.com](#))-- After investigating a way to keep her daughters' new kiddie pool algae-free, Ellen Holder discovered information on a website linking chlorine and childhood asthma. Alarmed, she immediately called her best friend, Carol Kelling, who lives in Phoenix and has both a swimming pool and a son with asthma. The two moms began a journey of discovery about the harmful affects of chemicals in our bodies and on the environment. This led them to change the way they cleaned their homes, what they fed their families and what they put on their skin.

Buying organic produce and cleaning with baking soda was easy. Finding skin care products that were chemical-free was a lot tougher. The lines carried at health food stores had labels that touted “organic” or “natural” but still contained chemicals such as parabens, a type of preservative known to be an endocrine disruptor and linked to breast tumors. When they specifically searched for products that were USDA certified organic, they were equally disappointed. “I remember being excited to find a lotion that was completely pure and even certified organic, but it ended up being stickier than many hair gels I've tried,” reports Holder. “I began mixing up my own batches of creams and lotions in my kitchen and throwing out all the products under my bathroom sink that weren't completely chemical-free.”

In trying to source ingredients for her concoctions on the Internet, Holder was able to find a few vendors that were already producing what she was trying to do in her kitchen. She and Kelling decided that there needed to be a place to find these products as well as information on the importance to go chemical-free. After a year of gathering information and testing product lines, Caren Inc. was born. Caren (the name is a combination of Carol and Ellen) is an online store for chemical-free skin care and launched in August 2007. “After a full year of working to get products selected and the site finished, we were amazed that within hours of the site going live we received our first order,” according to Holder. “We knew then that women like us were out there searching for this stuff.”

According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a nonprofit environmental research organization based in Washington, DC, nearly one of every 30 products sold in the U.S. fails to meet one or more industry or governmental cosmetics safety standards. They report that nearly 400 products sold in the U.S. contain chemicals that are prohibited for use in cosmetics in other countries, and more than 400 products contain ingredients that our own cosmetic industry safety panels have found unsafe when used as directed on product labels, including the U.S.-based Cosmetic Ingredient Review (CIR) and the International Fragrance Association. EWG also reports that the European Union has banned more than 1,100 ingredients from personal care products while to date the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has banned only ten.

The online store, www.carenonline.com, features articles on skin care, tips for going “natural”, and products ranging from all-natural moisturizers and cleansers to chemical-free serums, bath & body products and sunscreen. “Since we launched near the end of summer, we weren't sure how the sunscreen would sell,” remarked Kelling, “but it ended up being our first big seller.” Many of the lines they carry



are handmade right here in the U.S., though they do import from as far away as Bali, Indonesia (a fair trade company, of course). Recently they've added a line for babies out of demand from their customers. "Our products are not just for grown women concerned about wrinkles and their health," remarks Kelling, "they're buying our products for the whole family."

Caren Inc. is based in Overland Park, Kansas but both women work out of their home offices. Kelling lives in Peoria, Arizona and Holder in Overland Park. The business has allowed them the flexibility of still picking up the kids after school but both admit to working well past midnight each night. "Not hard to do when you are so passionate about what you do," says Kelling. So far, sales for the company have been doubling each month and the company is gearing up for the big holiday selling season. According to Holder, "It's going to be a very "green" Christmas this year."

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