

# Mother And Son Establish Businesses Using Creative Skills

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**LITITZ (Lancaster Co.)** —

Much has happened to Wendell Stoner since a story appeared about him in this paper nine years ago.

At that time, Wendell was a 8-year-old student, growing up on the family farm and working on overcoming a learning disability. The article focused on Wendell's efforts in overcoming dyslexia. Although he had a high IQ and was bright and inquisitive, a part of his brain reversed letters when he was reading.

Because some research indicated that jumping stimulates the brain by increasing the amount of oxygen reaching the brain cells, Wendell's parents, Ken and Ella Faye Stoner, invested in a large trampoline. Trampoline therapy was not a chore for Wendell, who loved jumping and doing flips on the trampoline for at least 20 minutes daily.

Wendell is now 18 years old. The family believes that Wendell's required daily exercises on the trampoline did indeed enable him to overcome his learning disability. After his stint with the trampoline, he did not need remedial help in the classroom.

Last year, Wendell was graduated from high school. The trampoline remains a visible part of the Stoner family's life. But instead of therapy, it is now used for fun and games when company

visits.

Since graduation, Wendell has achieved another of his long-term goals, which was to own his own craft business—just like he stated in the article written about him eight years ago.

At that time, Wendell helped his mom make yard sheep. The fad of owning a plywood frame-shaped sheep covered with sheep fleece was an idea that was a smashing success. The Stoners sold about 2,000 of the sheep and thousands of others copied her idea. But like all decorating ideas, the lawn sheep eventually faded in popularity. Wendell and his mother continue to come up with new ideas using their creative talents.

Wendell is now into photo sculpting. This is actually an old idea with a new method. Photo sculpting was popular in the 1940s, when black and white photos were pasted on wood, cut out, and inserted into a wooden base.

The method had problems. As the wood dried out, the picture cracked or loosened from the backing.

Wendell solved this problem by learning to use an acrylic material for the backing and to put on a protective overlay. This updated method is more costly and time-consuming than using wood, but the results are much better.

Photo sculpturing is especially popular with sports teams. Many national and local sport teams have



Photo sculpturing is especially popular with national and local sport teams. Individual and team photos are attached to acrylic, cut out, and given a protective overlay before inserted into a base for display.

individual and team pictures taken. The pictures are then given to Wendell who uses the photo sculpting process on them.

Often community and school teams purchase one of the photos for each team member. Because the sculptures do not require frames, the cost of the project is comparable to a framed photograph. The completed projects are reasonably priced, starting at \$10.

All Wendell needs to complete a job is a good, sharp photograph.

People aren't the only focus for the sculpting. Gaining in popularity are requests for a champion cow, horse or a favorite pet. Tractors, tractor trailer trucks, and other equipment are requested most often by men.

Another popular request is a photo sculpture of a house. Homeowners can give a picture of their home to Wendell, who turns it into a sculpture similar to the popular Cat Meow house series.

Names of persons are also cut out with pictures of the person intertwined in the cutout.

Most people display the photo sculptures on a desk or end table. But some ask for smaller cutouts to use on a key chain or as Christmas ornaments.

In addition to doing customized work, Wendell has also purchased rights to use and sell photo sculptures of famous sports figures.

For the past several years, Wendell's mother has established Faye's Monogramming and Embroidery. She does custom embroidery of names and logos on jackets, sweatshirts, and other apparel. In addition, she has 3,000 stock designs. Faye does a lot of work for DHIA and other agriculture companies.

Some farmers have had sweatshirts embroidered with a tractor and the words "Daddy's Little Farmers" and the names of each child.

Another popular aspect of her business is to design sweatshirts for grandparents such as: "Grandma's Pride and Joy" or "This Granny belongs to . . ." or "Grandma's Gang" followed by a listing of the grandchildren's names.

"The nice part is that I can put in the exact wording requested. Grandparents called by unusual names could never find something such as this in a regular store," Faye said.

Both Wendell and his mother operate a stand at Root's Country Market, Manheim, which is opened every Tuesday. Both also work out of their home and through mail order.

For more information, write to



When not working on his uncle's farm, Wendell Stoner works at establishing a photo sculpturing and 3-D picture business.



For the photo sculpturing process, Wendell needed to purchase new equipment in addition to using the wood-working equipment that he uses for other projects.

Wendell's Creations or to Faye's Monogramming and Embroidery, 124 W. Lexington Rd., Lititz, PA 17543 or call (717) 626-4911.



To make custom photo sculptures of houses similar to the Cat's Meow series, Wendell uses a sharply focused photograph provided by the customer.



Ella Faye Stoner often embroiders names and logos on sweatshirts, t-shirts, and jackets for agricultural groups and for individuals such as proud grandmothers who want to brag about their grandchildren.