

Kids Contest Corner

Kids Know Best When It Comes To Toys

(NAPSA)—Remember the Tom Hanks movie *Big* in which a 12-year-old boy worked for a toy company? The idea of kids running the show in corporate toy country isn't completely fictional. Just ask 10-year-old Sara Elias-Rodriguez, whose toy idea was brought to life and is being sold at Toys R Us, Target and specialty toy stores nationwide.

Or ask any child, of any age, attitude, or background, if he or she would like to have a job inventing toys and it's practically guaranteed the answer will be "Yes"—a very enthusiastic "Yes!"

While kids becoming toymakers might seem like wishful thinking, a company called Wild Planet Toys is encouraging kids to run with the idea—and is coming up with some great toys in the process.

It's all part of an annual toy idea contest called the Kid Inventor Challenge. The entrance qualifications are simple: the toy idea must come from a boy or girl between the ages of 6 and 12 that lives in the U.S. or Canada (excluding Quebec), and must be accompanied by a parent's signature.

The youngsters who submit the top 100 ideas receive free toys and sneak previews of upcoming Wild Planet playthings. They are also invited to join the Kid Inventor Team, a group of kid consultants who correspond with the company for an entire year to ensure that its toys are as cool, hip and fun as possible.

In addition to giving away tons



Pick up YOUR toy! Surrounded by prizes, Sara picks up the toy she created through the annual Kid Inventor Challenge contest.

of toys every year, Wild Planet works to turn one entry into a real toy, just like it did with Sara's idea.

Sara's invention, Secret Camera Journal (a book with a camouflaged 35mm camera that allows girls to capture candid moments), is sold in stores alongside other kid inventions, such as Richie Stachowski's Water Talkies, Shahid Minipara's Light Hand and Shannon Crabill's Talk Time. All of Wild Planet's Kid Inventors whose ideas make it to store shelves are paid a percentage of the profits from the sales of their toy.

Wild Planet is currently looking for creative kids to join its Kid Inventor Team. Entry forms, information and a teacher's curriculum can be downloaded for free at www.kidinventorchallenge.com. The deadline for entries is October 31, 2003.