

# Turning Dreams Into Child's Play

(NAPSA)—Sometimes it pays to follow a dream.

That's the lesson learned by Dan Lauer, who was hired in 1980 as a bank teller in Missouri. Lauer eventually worked his way up to vice president, but he was a banker with a secret: He wanted to invent a realistic baby doll based on water balloon dolls his sisters used to play with in the '60s.

"My sisters would tie water balloons together, draw faces on them with markers, and carry them around like warm little jiggly babies," recalls Lauer.

In a leap of faith, Lauer quit his job at the bank to pursue his dream and spent three years studying the doll industry, raising capital and building prototypes. The result: a line of water-filled dolls that replicate the warmth, weight and feel of a real baby. Lauer calls them, appropriately, Water Babies.

"Water Babies are innocent and wholesome, like dolls of yesteryear," says Lauer. "You fill them up with tap water from the kitchen sink, and they allow girls to have simple, nurturing play experiences."

Still, retailers were slow to catch on. But despite getting more than 700 rejection letters from toy companies—and even one cease and desist letter—Lauer persisted until he was able to get a local retailer to carry his invention for a test.

Lauer and his friends went to the local store and handed his warm, water-filled dolls to shop-



**One man's dream has helped bring joy to millions of children.**

pers. The shoppers loved the way Water Babies felt and the store couldn't keep them in stock. The demand for the dolls grew and retailers all across the world began ordering them.

Since then, more than 17 million Water Babies have been sold, making them the second best-selling large doll of all time (behind Cabbage Patch Kids).

Today, 20 years after Lauer's decision to quit his job at the bank, Water Babies are being reintroduced to a whole new generation of young "mommies." They've been redesigned and are being re-launched by toy company Wild Planet.

As for his big idea paying off, since inventing the dolls, Lauer has gotten married and he and his wife have had four real babies of their own. He supports his family with the money he earns from his invention.

Water Babies are available in stores, online at several retailers, including [www.shopwildplanet.com](http://www.shopwildplanet.com), or by calling (800) 247-6570.