

Help . . . We Got Kids celebrates 10 years

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They say the 10th anniversary is aluminum, but really for moms Elisa Morton Palter and Shari Wert, it's all about paper . . . or more appropriately, about 358 pages.

The authors, and for the most part business partners, are celebrating the 10th anniversary of their widely popular GTA children's resource manual, *Help . . . We Got Kids*. The manual is the only comprehensive directory listing specifically businesses geared towards children on the market. There are almost 2,000 listings sorted among 40 categories including: new categories Bar/Bah Mitzvahs and Corporate/Family Events; and such staples as Clubs, Indoor Playgrounds, Art/Craft Classes.

"Ten years is really a long time," says Morton Palter. "It's really amazing that we've continued to grow every single year. We compare ourselves to some of the other businesses that have come and gone and we see what's happened in the industry over the years and we're very, very grateful for the support that we've received from the whole kids' industry and all of the families who are behind us buying the books."

A decade ago, the two new mothers



(Clockwise from top right) Elisa, Heidi, Adam, Jamie, Daniel, Sydney, Shari and Dani celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Help . . . We Got Kids*.

the two began the search for a new career change. In trying to come up with an idea — one that was family-oriented — they were met with difficulty, as there wasn't a resource available to them to aid in their search. Eureka, Morton Palter and Wert, stumbled onto something.

"It's amazing how many people call us and write us and e-mail us and when we go to shows they come up to us and say 'oh, this is my bible; this is the most amazing book,'" says Morton Palter. "The only ones who sometimes are hard to get at, are the ones who are the first of their group having a baby, because none of their friends know about it yet. So those are the ones we really have to educate."

"But once they've got it, or once somebody in their group has it, it's wonderful how the word gets around from one friend to another. They borrow it and then they go 'you know what, I really got to have my own, because I'm not giving my friend's book back,' or something like that."

That first edition started with 1,150 listings in 25 categories. The

10th anniversary guide has a new look "for the next decade," plus lots of new coupons worth more than \$4,000 in value. The coupons have been a big part of the previous editions and this year's lot includes: 10 per cent off of piñatas at A Different Kind of Party; \$25 off at Amazon Indoor Playground; and 5 per cent off of all regularly priced products at Kiddie Proofers.

The authors are now compiling listings, which are free to businesses, for their 11th *Help . . . We Got Kids*. The 2004 guide is available in most major bookstores retailing for \$13.95.

"We're constantly updating our database," says Morton Palter. "We're constantly checking out, driving streets checking out other publications, hearing from friends and readers and new businesses and luckily now we've been around long enough if it's a new business coming in, they call us and say 'how do I get in?' and when's the new one coming out?"

"We have the website as well, so people can put something up immediately. So we do hear about things almost as fast they start these days, which is great. So we're constantly updating and then at the beginning of March we will be updating fulltime."

at the time were working in the business world when they decided it was time for a career change that would

allow them to not only be moms, but as well, be able to pay the bills.

So armed with business degrees,