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'Cleavage **Caddy**' gives bra pockets

ANDREA WOLF/Times-Herald staff writer

With more than 68 jobs on her resumé, Laura McLaren has never been one to keep doing something that doesn't make her happy. "I've had a lot of jobs, and life is too short work somewhere you don't like," said McLaren, a 37-year-old mother of two young boys who lives in Vallejo. "I am always looking for something to keep me interested and challenged, and I think I have finally found it."

A natural at marketing and sales, McLaren is working in her spare time on a budding new business.

About a year ago, she settled into a position as community relations director at Merrill Gardens at North Bay retirement community in Vallejo. She said the most rewarding part of that job is helping seniors and their families transition into assisted living.

But it's not enough. An ambitious woman always looking for her next project, McLaren started her own garment business this year and now is fulfilling a lifelong dream of being an inventor.

"Since I was a little girl, I knew I was eventually going to invent something," McLaren said. "I just didn't know what it was until this year."

Laura McLaren

Age: 37

Hometown: Fairfield; now lives in Vallejo

Occupation: Community relations director, Merrill Gardens North Bay, Vallejo

Family: Sons Zac, 11, and Tristan, 4; and boyfriend, Craig Furman

Quote: "I just follow my gut and do what feels right."

She said her invention, the "Cleavage **Caddy**," solves a problem countless women face every day.

She came up with the idea after using scarves to conceal her cleavage in work environments and finding herself constantly tucking things in her bra for security and convenience.

The cloth garment looks like a bra without straps, and secures with a snap to a brassiere. It's outfitted with pockets and decorative lace to create a safe place to put things like a phone, pen, money and lipstick.

"I know so many women who put things in their bras when they don't have pockets or don't want to carry their purse," said McLaren. "It's your top shelf to independence."

Encouraged by the women she met through the American Business Women's Association to start her own company, McLaren teamed up with a local garment maker and just received her garment license last week.

McLaren said she has already had overwhelming response for her product.

"I wear one every day and have sold them to ladies at work, women I meet on the street, women who like to go clubbing," McLaren said. She even sold one to a man who was tired of carrying all his wife's stuff when the two went out.

She also features versions like the "Brazongo," like the **caddy** but without the lace, and said women of all sizes can wear them.

McLaren's father is helping her design a solution for men tired of carrying a wallet in their back pocket.

She said she has received some odd looks - and perhaps offended a few people - when reaching into her bosom to retrieve a pen or business card, but overall the response to her product has been overwhelmingly positive.

Even as her new business is taking off, McLaren is already looking toward her next projects. She would like to open a shelter for senior women, start a foundation for autistic children, write a book and become a motivational speaker.

"This project has been so exciting for me, but I've got so many ideas for things I want to do," McLaren said. "I just follow my gut and do what feels right."

For information about McLaren's business, visit www.cleavagecaddy.com.

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