

## TownBusiness



FRANCIS CRESCIA/TOWN CRIER

**SAMPLING WHILE CAMPING:** Lisa Vogel of Mama Media with her children in their North Toronto home, drawing with Crayola crayons. Vogel has introduced Crayola to 15 GTA kids' day camps through her Campling program.

# Marketing biz goes to camp

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Business

When Lisa Vogel saw what her kids were snacking on at their day camp two summers ago, she says she wasn't 100 percent thrilled.

The North Toronto resident says her kids were eating sugary snacks.

When she asked the camp director if they could do better, he was receptive, but realistic.

Healthy snacks, she was told at the time, are matter of resources and money the camp didn't have.

That's when Vogel, founder of Mama Media in North Toronto, had a light bulb moment.

"I said to myself, 'Wait a minute, I do sampling.'"

A year later, Vogel had introduced her Campling sampling program to 12 day camps, with Sun-Rype, the major sponsor, providing fruit snacks and drinks.

Now in its second year, the program has expanded to 15

camps. This year's major sponsor, Banana Boat Sun Care, is providing full-size tubes of sunscreen, while Crayola is donating art supplies.

The goal is to balance camp needs with sponsorship needs, Vogel says. And she isn't hiding the fact that sponsors are reaching what she calls a "dual target audience" of both child and parent.

That's why she says she works exclusively with day camps, because children go home to their parents at the end of the day.

But it's not like kids are sitting through commercials for the sponsors' products. Vogel says the samples are integrated seamlessly in to camp activities.

"It should never feel like it's advertising for kids."

The kids' needs are at the forefront, she says, adding she spoke to each camp individually to determine its needs.

"Nothing comes into the camp they don't approve," she says.

Rick Howard, director of Zodiac Swim & Specialty Camp in North Toronto describes the program as a "win-win-win" situation for the kids, camp, and sponsors.

The kids need to benefit, he adds, or he's not interested. He says he hasn't heard any complaints.

"The parents look at it and see the camp is providing extra value."

The extra feel-good factor is a portion of Campling revenues assist underprivileged kids in going to camps. Last year the fund helped 40 children.

Vogel tells story of a bus driver whose three children rode with him every day and watched other kids go to camp. "I can only imagine what those kids felt like," she says.

In August, all three kids went to camp thanks to the fund.

"If you're a kid and you want to go to camp, the answer should always be 'yes'."