

Daily Herald

### **Stacking up big sales**

By Kim Mikus | Daily Herald Columnist

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If you spend time cooking, you know how frustrating it can be to find a particular spice bottle tucked away inside the cabinet.

Arlington Heights resident Mark Greenwood noticed this while his wife, an avid cook, often found it difficult to find spice bottles.

With a career in product development, he first looked at what was available on the market. "I found that none of the racks out there worked," Greenwood said.

He then designed a rack with pull out shelves to be placed in the cabinet. Cooks can alphabetize their spices and are able to see how much is left in each bottle.

Nearly two years ago, Greenwood, 51, invented the SpiceStack. Produced in Elk Grove Village, the product features three pull-out, drop-down drawers that make spices easy to find and reach. The spice bottles are stored horizontally in the drawers with the labels clearly visible.

The shelf holds 27 standard-size or 54-half size round spice bottles. Four non-skid pads on the bottom of the unit hold it security in place inside the cupboard.

The business started small. The Greenwood's used the family garage as a storage and shipping area.

They quickly outgrew their home and moved to a warehouse. Last year the company sold more than 50,000 shelves, primarily through the Internet and catalogs.

Greenwood's daughter, Lauren, who was working for a marketing information company, joined her father in running SpiceStack Inc. Lauren, 25, graduated from Rolling Meadows High School and then the University of Virginia business school with a marketing and management degree.

All members of the family pitch in when needed.

Mark's wife, Cynthia, handles public relations. Their middle daughter, Joanna, who just graduated with a degree in graphic design, created the logo. Their youngest daughter Melissa, a senior at Rolling Meadows High School, helps administratively.

Lauren, an avid cook, said it's fun to wake up everyday and talk to her family about running the Arlington Heights-based business. She lives in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood.

The shelf that sells for \$29.95 has been featured in several magazines including Coastal Living, Cooking Pleasures and Women's Day.

The next step in promoting the product is launching an infomercial set to air Monday. It will run on about 15 national cable stations including Food HD, Discover Healthy and Women's Entertainment.

"What started out as an experiment is really turning into something big," said Mark, who works full time as a product designer for a baby company with offices in Lake County. "We weren't sure how quickly this would grow," he added.

The next step for the business is getting the SpiceStack into larger retail store chains. "We're currently talking with a couple manufacturing companies to take it to the retail level," Mark said.

For more information, call (800) 220-2769 or check out [www.spicestack.com](http://www.spicestack.com).



Bob Chwedyk | Staff Photographer

Inventor Mark Greenwood and his daughter, Lauren Greenwood, run a company selling the SpiceStack organization system. They have sold more than 50,000 of the units in one year.