

The Touch makes for a perfect holiday gift

By Tammy Hansen
CORRESPONDENT

Adrian Anthony says she is "elf employed" during the holiday season.

This is the time of year the Tracy mother of two spends much of her time packing and shipping the game she and her husband devised two years ago. She and Christopher Anthony are hoping this holiday season will help their game "The Touch," build on its growing following with some repeat customers looking for the perfect family present.

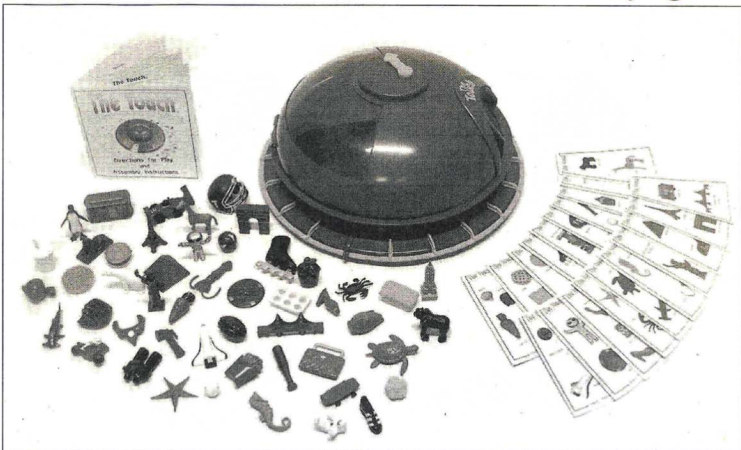
The Touch is a sensory romp with players reaching into a fist-sized dome to identify miniature versions of everyday items in just 30 seconds. It already has received awards from The National Parenting Center, National Association for Gifted Children, Dr. Toy and several others. The game is also being sold through several national catalogs and locally at Miss Millie's Learning Loft downtown.

The game, which has sold 8,000 units since its introduction in July of 2002, is in 200 stores nationwide. A second, no-assembly version was introduced this year. The new version is also less expensive at \$29.99. The Anthony's also recently started selling two expansion packs with new items to discover.

Adrian says husband Christopher came up with the idea while he was searching for something, by feel, in his car.

"He can't even remember what he was looking for," says Adrian. "He's an inventor by nature but a contractor by trade."

And he's still inventing. Christopher's most recent prototype is for a desktop novelty toy that lets grownups manipulate a small surfer dude over a magnet ocean.



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It isn't just toys that spark his imagination. Anthony Innovations Inc. has also patented a crawl space ventilator designed to reduce under-home moisture. The kit can be installed by the homeowner.

While Christopher is the idea man in between contracting jobs, Adrian does the marketing, shipping, graphic design, promotions and whatever else might come up in selling The Touch.

"We do everything," she says. "As I'm getting the kids to school I'm also checking my voice mail and my e-mail."

Son Damien, 13, and daughter Rachel, 9, have had to adjust to the Santa's workshop atmosphere at home, but occasionally work as helper elves.

"They like when they can

The Touch
A game of sensory perception & memory

help and make a couple of extra dollars allowance," Adrian says.

Chasing the dream of creating a game has meant some setbacks and challenges. The couple originally tried to sell the game to a major manufacturer. But as Adrian points out, even the hugely popular Cranium game is still sold by a small company. One major manufacturer was very complimentary of the game, she says.

After failing to sell The Touch to someone else, the Anthony's decided to make it themselves with the help of a Hong Kong manufacturer. They warehouse the game locally and handles sales, marketing and

Where to buy

You can order The Touch at (800) 828-7002 or online at www.thetouch-game.com. Christmas orders are being taken until Dec. 21. The cost is \$29.99.

Or get it at Miss Millie's Learning Loft, 809 Central Ave., 833-9096 or www.missmillie.com.

shipping from their home.

Also, "we live on a very tight budget to make sure the business is running well." But she's not complaining. "Inspiration goes a long way."

One of the best things about The Touch is that almost every family member can play it,

Adrian says. Even teens, notorious for walking away from family games, are sucked into the mystery of the dome.

Adrian is especially happy when customers come back to buy a game as a gift. She says The Touch is the sort of activity that slows down today's frantic pace for parents and their children. "There's a lot of distractions in family life these days," she says.

As for the Anthony's, nothing is distracting them from their dream of being major suppliers for Santas wish list in the coming years.

"We're looking for our break," says Adrian. And as for new toys and games on the horizon, "We have a couple of ideas in our heads."