

Arizona toys take Manhattan

A few weeks back on my Nerdvana blog I reported that Tucson's Lulubell Toy Bodega, a store specializing in designer vinyl collectibles and gallery pieces, was setting up shop in downtown Mesa and planning to make the 128 W. Main St. address its company headquarters when it opens in mid-November.



Jayson Peters
TALKING SHOP

Trying to catch up with owner Amy Del Castillo to get more details has been a challenge, not least because she and her crew had their hands full preparing to make a splash at this past weekend's New York Comic Con.

Lulubell employs just three staff members in addition to Del Castillo and her business partner Luke Rook, a Tucson native who now lives in Tokyo — putting the company at ground zero for toy culture and collectible couture. Del Castillo says many of the toy lines they import can't be found at any other U.S. shops.

But it's not all imports: Cherry Vinyl, a division of Lulubell, produces "delicious art toys" along with Los Angeles designer Julie B. of Pretty in Plastic. And Rook designs his own line of toys called Grody Shogun that consistently sell out on release day. Head to evtown.com/lulubell to see samples.

Del Castillo said they chose downtown Mesa for their expansion for the explosion of small independent businesses taking root there and the eclectic events they spark.

"We love giving back to the community that gives so much to us by hosting various art events, and bringing in items you otherwise cannot find in the U.S.," she said. "So downtown Mesa seemed to be the perfect environment for us, and we hope to add to and promote to the already growing scene of the area."

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Money

Business, technology and personal finance

BIOMEDICAL BUSINESS

College programs turn to E.V. firm's DNA kit

Tempe product gives students an advantage

By Emily Timm
FOR THE TRIBUNE

The way students study DNA strands has met its match with a new genome test kit produced by a Tempe company.

The product, marketed by GenoSensor Corp., is called the EduPrimer™ DNA Profiling Kit.

Since its release at the beginning of this year, it's already in about 10 percent of universities nationwide according to James Xai, president of GenoSensor.

"We're receiving a lot of interest from schools looking to advance their biomedical program," Xai says.

The DNA Profiling Kit works in accordance with a piece of equipment that's been in use for years: the PCR, or the polymerase chain reaction, machine.

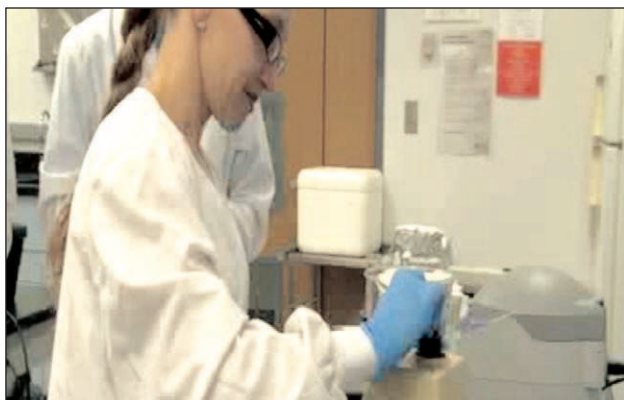
Although PCR equipment is not new, few colleges choose to teach with it because it's harder for professors to work with rather than using a microscope, Xai explains. But most employers in the workforce already use the technology, leaving graduating students at a disadvantage when they're applying for jobs.

"It really captures the modern technology. Students who do not graduate knowing it will need to be re-trained," Xai says.

Students learn how to isolate DNA from human cells, and then amplify and analyze specific DNA strands using PCR technology. The Profiling Kit puts the student right in front of the re-agents for DNA analysis. Students often complete their work with more efficiency and better results.

"If a school sees this is where the science is going and what they need to prepare their students, they need to learn this new technology," Xai says of the kit and the PCR technology.

The DNA Profiling Kit comes with 24 individual DNA tests, as most classroom labs have



Tempe's GenoSensor Corp. is marketing a new genome test kit that is gaining traction in college biomedical programs. Watch a video about this story at www.eastvalleytribune.com/videos. [Emily Timm/for the Tribune]

24 or fewer participating students at one time.

"I think it's really cool for students to see the real-life DNA strand," says Brittany Ebbing, a lab assistant and junior undergraduate student at Arizona State University.

The kit uses fewer steps compared with other DNA profiling kits on the market. Because each step builds upon itself in an experiment, it's crucial for students to get the correct results at every step.

Some students find the protocol for GenoSensor's kit to be much more straightforward.

"It's a lot easier for students to use. Fewer steps," Bo Faust, a lab assistant and graduate student at Arizona State University, says. "The other kits are for hard-core scientists. This is user friendly."

Here are the steps (all but the PCR are included in the kit's contents):

1. A student collects his or her own cheek cells using a swab.

2. Cells are quickly lysed (broken apart) and DNA is isolated from cell in a PCR tube.

3. Students then find and analyze the specific gene in the DNA by PCR amplification.

So what's holding schools back from jumping on GenoSensor's new gadget?

Funds.

In Arizona, ASU is the only school using the new technology.

"I'm hoping Arizona could do even better and (science-based companies in Arizona) could all grow together and make education even stronger here," Xai says.

Students in states like California and New York, where education funding is higher, are more likely to have the technology now or in the near future.

But the 2011 innovation is still young, Xai says, and he has high hopes for the product's potential.

"Even schools who cannot afford it now are planning to get a hold of it for the future," Xai says. "Even community colleges are interested."

The DNA lab procedure requires both the PCR and the DNA Profiling Kit. The PCR machine costs between \$5,000 and \$6,000 and will last up to 10 years. Each DNA Profiling Kit is a one-time use only product. Xai did not want to disclose how much each kit of 24 costs schools, but says it's affordable.

"The bottom line is I hope people will catch on to improving education in this state and in the nation," Xai said. "It will make our nation stronger."

GenoSensor Corp. established its headquarters in Tempe in 2003, but it is reaching customers all over the world. The small private company develops and markets research and diagnostic products for both educational and professional environments.

Xai says the DNA Profiling Kit has had a strong, positive impact on the company's profits, although he would not divulge revenue numbers.

He predicts the genomic technology market will grow "very fast and very big. This product has certainly given us a profit."

Growth talk, coffee on menu in Mesa

Mesa Councilman Dennis Kavanaugh is hosting a Coffee With the Councilmember event Friday morning, with a focus on economic development. Kavanaugh will be joined by economic development director Bill Jabjiniak for an updates on development along the Metro light-rail line, new things downtown and the Crescent Crown beverage distributorship opening next year on Broadway Road. The event includes a free breakfast prepared by culinary students from the East Valley Institute of Technology. The event is scheduled from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. at the EVTI Ballroom, 1601 W. Main St. Participants must RSVP at charlotte.mcdermott@mesaaz.gov or (480) 644-5294.

CHANDLER

Angel investors info at tech incubator

Coffee & Connections will take some of the mystery out of angel investors at its next quarterly networking event, 7:30 to 9 a.m. Thursday at the Innovations Incubator, 145 S. 79th St., Chandler.

Jim Goulka, managing director of the Arizona Technology Investor Forum (ATIF), will talk about what his group of 40 investors are interested in and how entrepreneurs should communicate with them. ATIF members have a proven record of investment with more than \$5 million invested in 17 companies in the last 4 1/2 years.

Light refreshments are provided, and the event is free, but space is limited so registration is required. To register, contact Sanjay Dhole, SBDC at (480) 784-0591 or sanjay.dhole@do-mail.maricopa.edu.

VALLEYWIDE

Basis to open new campus

Basis Schools, Inc., which opened a campus in Chandler this year, announced plans Friday to open a cam-

The EVTI
East Valley Tribune Index
of 20 local public companies
573.64
Up +11.29

Companies	Price	Chng
Allegiant Travel Co.	50.46	0.76
Amkor	4.80	0.07
Apollo Group	43.33	1.15
Avnet	29.55	0.09
Boeing	63.47	1.69
Qwest/CenturyLink	34.70	0.37
Freeport McMoran	35.38	0.27
First Solar	55.91	2.95
Intel	23.4	0.12
JDA Software	27.51	0.98
US Airways Group	6.02	0.17
Southwest Airlines	8.82	0.21
Microchip Technology	33.71	0.34
Mobile Mini	17.44	0.57
Medicis	37.95	0
Insight Enterprises	15.66	0.51
P.F. Chang's China Bistro	27.18	-0.56
Pinnacle West (APS)	45.07	0.59
Swift Transportation	8.58	0.81
Taser International	4.70	0.20

pus next school year in the north Phoenix area. Basis Schools have been recognized by Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report and The Washington Post for high student achievement. The organization recently announced plans to expand outside Arizona with approval of a charter in Washington, D.C. The new campus will serve students in grades five through 10 for the 2012-13 school year, and expand with one grade per year until it gets serves fifth through 12th grades. For more information, or to join the interest list for the new school, see www.basischools.org.

AHWATUKEE

Chamber names Gill to top spot

The Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce announced Monday the appointment of Anne Gill as chamber president and chief executive officer, effective Nov. 7. Gill most recently served as executive director of the WellCare Foundation and has experience as a non-profit leader. She and her husband own a small business near Ahwatukee.

• Briefs compiled from staff and wire reports.