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PEOPLE

Show me the money, honey

BY JENNIFER SALDARRIAGA

When he was only 6, Adam Harris went around the neighborhood toting his father's guitar, offering to entertain people for money.

Without knowing how to play a single note, he came back with \$30.

And so a salesman was born.

Ever since, Adam has sold, or tried to sell, everything from grapefruits to massages to dinosaur DNA tests to jewelry.

Now at the ripe old age of 10, Adam's latest enterprise is his most lucrative: selling honey from his own beehive.

Adam produces the honey with his father's help, but he packs, distributes and sells the honey on his own.

"I want to make money," says Adam, with no small amount of determination. "There is stuff I want to buy."

The honey idea was hatched after Adam and his family visited friends in Louisiana who had a beehive.

"Since Adam is always looking for something to sell, I thought the beehive would be a great idea," says Adam's dad, Don Harris, a veterinarian.

They bought all the stuff, including the bees -- which came through the mail to the unpleasant surprise of some postal workers.

Then, they had to assemble everything and wait for three months to start getting honey.

The first time, Adam got about 20 eight-ounce jars of honey.

Now, after almost a year, he is getting 60 jars every three months.

He started selling honey door-to-door in his Pinecrest neighborhood. The first time it took him less than a week to sell 20 jars.

Adam and his father usually tackle the collection process together. Inside each bee box are 10 panels on which the bees build honeycomb. These panels can be individually removed. Each contains several pounds of comb and raw honey.

In Adam's operation, the comb is scraped from the panels, then the honey is squeezed from the comb and bottled.

The 10-year-old tycoon then takes the honey to several stores that sell it for him, and he pays a commission.

An eight-ounce jar goes for \$6 and the stores get \$1 for each jar. But some say they pass on their commission -- which is good for Adam.

"We would never take his money," says Dale Gegerson at optometrist Gary Gegerson's office in Pinecrest, one of the businesses selling Adam's honey. "When I tell people how old Adam is, they all think it is great that he is so motivated."

Motivation made Adam about \$300 last summer, money he used to buy an electric scooter. Now, he is saving for a gas-driven version.

"Adam hardly ever asks me for money," his dad says. "When he wants something he usually says, 'I am going to sell something' and comes up with a new idea."

Jose Davila, 12, one of Adam's buddies, says "I think he has very good ideas to make money, because we can't work yet."

Jose also says that Adam is not daunted when people turn him down. He continues trying until he gets a yes.

Adam says his first brush with being brushed off came when he tried to peddle some grapefruits to the mother of a classmate. She told him he was wasting his time.

IF AT FIRST . . .

"After that, I went back to my house and tried to find something that people would like more but I did not find anything," Adam says. ``So I went to the neighbor's house with the grapefruit and he actually bought some."

Adam even managed to sell five "dinosaur DNA" certificates, which guaranteed the buyer they would get first crack at a pet Adam planned to create by extracting dinosaur DNA from a mosquito and combining it with reptile DNA -- a long-term project, to be sure. The certificates Adam sold helped with a charity fundraiser at Gulliver Academy.

When he decided he wanted to sell jewelry, he posted signs all around the building where his father used to live. When nobody came to him, he realized the way to go was door to door.

"I don't know where he gets that from -- he likes to talk to people and explains things to them. He likes to make a deal," says Trish Harris, Adam's mother.

Adam has so much creativity that it is hard for his parents to keep up with everything.

ON THE GO

Sometimes his father learns of Adam's new ventures from people in the neighborhood. They tell him about some cute kid who is going around the neighborhood selling something like neck massages for a dollar.

"His idea of having fun is selling stuff," says Don Harris. ``When other kids are watching cartoons and riding bikes, he is looking for stuff to sell and going door to door."

Even with his business, Adam has time to watch some television -- MTV -- and he plays drums. He also likes to play hockey.

When he is on vacation he likes surfing and snowboarding.

At Gulliver, the budding entrepreneur makes A's and B's.

Adam says he wants to be a professional drummer when he grows up.

But for now he is keeping his honey business.

"This is what I will do until I get a real job," Adam says.