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November 2005

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**Ending "Segregation" in Craft and Hobby Industry
Kim Luty Challenges Manufacturers to Follow Her Lead With
New and Expanding Product Line**

"When most people use the word segregation, it's usually not in relation to the world of scrapbooking," says entrepreneur Kim Luty. "Yet in the hobby and crafts industry, images of people with differences are often segregated from images of what we commonly refer to as able-bodied people."

Luty is referring to the common practice of niche marketing with products that depict a target audience exclusively, to the exclusion of the non-target audience. "Think what this means for people in blended families," she says noting that while most people over 30 grew up in traditional single race, 2-parent family, **74% of today's households are single parent or blended families.** (Source: Introduction to Blended Families by Linda Schertz, Ph.D)

Blending In...Segregation Out

"Trends suggest that within the next five years, **50% of American families with children under the age of 18** will be blended families," says Luty. However, she says it's still a challenge to find images of blended images the scrapbooking industry.

"It's not intentional discrimination, of course," she is quick to point out. But intentional or not, she feels that the results are the same.

Tarnishing The "Golden Years"

"Scrapbooking products with a narrow focus may serve a niche audience and make marketing efforts easier, but they can literally 'ghettoize' people within a specific age group, or race, or with certain kinds of differences or disabilities." According to Luty, seniors are frequently victimized in this way.

"Once upon a time, seniors may have spent their "golden years" rocking on the front porch, but today's seniors are incredibly active and on the go," Luty says with passion. "And the businesses that serve them need to be responsive who today's seniors are and how they live."

A look at the airline industry underscores Luty's understanding of the senior lifestyle. "Boeing Payloads Center in Everett, Washington, for example, recently conducted a nine-month research project to determine how best to serve the senior airline market," says Luty. At Boeing, the "conventional wisdom" is that an aging Baby Boomer population, used to flying since childhood, won't stop just because their hair turns gray.

"Boeing gets it," says Luty. "But there are a lot of companies who don't...and most scrapbook images present grandparents looking happy, but weary, sitting around and living rather passive lifestyles."

Playing the Percentages

Segregation of people with physical disabilities is also extremely evident. According to the U.S. Census Bureau. 7% of boys and 4% of girls ages 5-15 have disabilities, 20% of men and 18% of women ages 16-64 have disabilities, and 43% of women and 40% of men 65 or older have disabilities.

"That's the world we live in," says Luty, "a world of differences." Yet despite the fact that **one in five Americans has a disability**, finding products and images that show the full spectrum of abilities and disabilities is still problematic.

Luty adds that the Bureau's statistics "only tell part of the story." The Census numbers refer primarily to physical disabilities. "But there are also variations in mood, personality, and affect that make people different, if not disabled," she says.

Luty feels strongly that "It's important for people to be able to **validate their feelings and mental state** by seeing them reflected in others." She points out that "People aren't always happy and smiling. Sometimes they're quiet, or reflective, or thoughtful, or maybe just a little blue. And yet you seldom see anything but grinning faces in scrapbooking products."

Differences Begin at Home...Along With A New Career

A one-time IT professional with a background in software and engineering, Luty has always had an interest in scrapbooks and never thought much about the "political correctness" of products for scrapbooking enthusiasts any more than she thought much about her own disability -- Epidermolysis Bullosa. a rare skin condition. While it is far from her defining characteristic, EB "opened my eyes to how many others are outside the so-called norm," she says, "and of how often we exclude different people without even thinking."

Luty's flash of clarity served as the catalyst for career change and a new business. She left a lucrative post in the software industry to found **Same-Differences**, a popular scrapbook and paper craft product line that celebrates diversity in everyday living.

"Our goal is to show that everyone has differences and that, ultimately, those differences are all the same," she explains, distilling the company's message down to its essence. "We simply show people...all kinds of people...going about the business of life in a positive fashion." The company first exploded onto the

craft and hobby scene with transparent sticker sheets featuring **Everday Kids** -- adorable boys and girls, some of whom are differently abled.

"Today, **Everyday Stickers** and our brand-spanking-new **Ready for You** kits feature such new-to-the-industry images as blended families, teens with physical disabilities, and active seniors," says Luty. "And that's what I'd like to see other companies do, as well. Create images that show **people with differences working and playing together**...all with differences, but all the same."

When Too Much Is Never Enough

A true scrapbooking enthusiast, not just a savvy entrepreneur, Luty knows that when it comes to scrapbook materials "you can never get enough of a good thing." Not content to simply offer the same diecuts and stickers, **Same-Differences** has recently added a new line of **Everyday Phrases** to their catalogue.

The specialty die cuts "are fun, catchy phrases to highlight scrapbook layouts, cards, or other paper craft items," explains Luty, who notes that they were created specifically to pair with **Everyday Stickers**. "Scrapbooking is a way for people to show the me nobody knows," says Luty. "And what's wonderful about **Everyday Phrases** is how they allow scrapbook fans to really express themselves in a very personal way."

Printed on white cardstock, the phrases can be "decorated with inks, used as stencils, or highlighted with other media so that the message they deliver is 100% customized," says Luty.

It Can Never Be Too Easy or Too Fun

Also new to the Same-Differences collection are the **Ready for You** kits. "The kits make it so easy to be clever and creative," says Luty. Each kit comes with patterned and solid cardstock, a sheet of Everyday Stickers, an appropriately

themed diecut, all the embellishments needed to complete the layout and other related projects, "and even an idea sketch sheet for inspiration." she adds.

Ready for You is ready for anything," says Luty. She points out that each kit is "bursting with enough materials for a completed scrapbook page, a greeting card, and another project, such as a tag or bookmark." Luty believes this approach represents the "new generation" of scrapbooking kits, quickly adding, "but they can easily dovetail with an 'old school' approach or sensibility."

The products offered by **Same-Differences** feature "a variety of characters with a variety of differences, not just physical," says Luty of the charming people who fill the pages of the company's catalogue. "And we present those differences from a fresh, new perspective that emphasizes **inclusiveness** by treating the diversity issue as a natural part of everyday life."

You won't find pages images of canes, wheelchairs, other iconic images of disability at **Same-Differences**. What you *will* find is a "slice of life" scrapbooking style -- men and women, boys and girls, working and having fun. Some are sitting in wheelchairs; others are not. Some have seeing eye dogs; others do not. Some are grinning from ear to ear while others have expressions that are hard to place.

There are people of different ages, races, and religions and "families" of every definition. "The people you see in the images at **Same-Differences** are the people you see on the bus...at work...at your place of worship...at school...at the ballpark...and at the movies," says Luty. "They're people like you -- different, but the same."

Visit the Same-Differences website at www.same-differences.com. Same-Differences will also be exhibiting at the Craft and Hobby Association's Winter

Trade Show in January, 2006. For media information, please contact: Kim Luty at press@same-differences.com or by phone at 856-816-5780.

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