

h&f BUSINESS



NURSERY TIMES: Amanda Batcheller, Maria-Katharina Bock, Timea Szaszfai, Charlie Murray and Lucyna Field join the play while (top) owner Moira Walsh does creative work with Lucas and Olivia Bogle PICTURE BY LEIGH QUINNELL

A DREAM JOB FOR 'CUPID' IS CARING FOR CHERUBS

MOIRA WALSH is crazy about babies and says she would not quit her job as a 'nanny cupid' even if she was a millionaire.

"If I won the lottery tomorrow, I would carry on with my work; I find it so rewarding," says the 46-year-old owner of Fulham Nannies.

Inspired by her own experience as a nanny, Moira decided to set up the agency last year. "As a nanny I had registered with a number of agencies and became dissatisfied by the impersonal, conveyor-belt treatment experienced by many nannies," she says.

Moira, a mother of two, started working with children after she had her first child 23 years ago.

"When I started working with kids it was just so fun, I thought it was absolutely fabulous and decided to get qualified in nursing," Moira says.

Although she now works a step away from the kids, Moira still enjoys a close contact with the families, who she deals personally with all the way through the process of finding a nanny.

"You get so involved with the families and it is so nice to get photos of the new babies," she says.

"But we value our nannies as much as our families and appreciate and value the work that they do."

Thanks to this attitude and Moira's many contacts the agency now has a wide selection of nannies on its books, and offers to

set up everything from emergency care to live-in nannies.

"I did use a lot of my contacts," she says. "My first client, for example, was my last employer, and when you work as a nanny you do get to know a lot of other nannies and know how they work so you are happy to sign them up."

The nannies vary widely in their profile and while the request for, for instance, male nannies is rising, Moira enjoys to be able to fulfil everybody's wishes.

"I just get a huge thrill when I match families up with the perfect nanny. It is rather like playing cupid in a way."

Moira carries out her work from her home office – her daughter's old room – in Stependale Road, and currently runs the agency single-handedly.

"It is my business but my husband Eric does help me a little bit with the IT side of things. I am not that technical," she says.

The technical issues, and the hard work of starting up a business, have not yet frightened off Moira.

"I am really enjoying running the agency, and I still get to hug all the babies who come in to see us," she says, proving that even after 23 years working with kids the enthusiasm has not faded.

Signe Hansen

CLICK ON

www.fulhamnannies.co.uk

Work suiting Philip to a T

► T-shirt creations are the antidote to boring high street designs
► Clothing comes from China, but there is no child exploitation

SIGNE HANSEN

WITH his own baby on its way in just three weeks, Shepherds Bush resident Philip Shepherd has extra good reason to rejoice as his new children's T-shirt company hits the internet.

Little T Clothing was started by Philip and his wife Sheba after they returned to the UK from a four-year stay in New York. Back home they found what Philip calls a "boring, uninspiring T-shirt collection" in the high street. It was something which Philip, a great T-shirt fan, could not accept.

"I love T-shirts," he said. "I work in the music

business and the music industry is all T-shirts."

Philip developed the business idea with a friend three years ago, but when the friend lost interest Philip took on the adventure by himself last August.

He took a short course in business and marketing at the Shepherd's Bush Enterprise Centre, then the next stop was China. "I went to China, Portugal and Pakistan to buy the T-shirts," he says.

"China was interesting; it is a long way away, but a great place; the people were lovely.

"They took me to the factory as I wanted to make sure no children were involved in the making, and it was interesting to see how all the women sat there sewing."

Back in the UK it

was time to find the designer who was to create all the colourful prints for the white T-shirts.

Philip got 500 responses to an advert, and realised just how many people shared his passion.

Having chosen his main designer, Philip still wanted to make room for some of the others to have a go, and so created an on-line design competition.

"Everybody can submit a design, then people can vote for the best one and every month we choose one to get printed," he says.

While the T-shirts come from abroad, all the designer prints are put on in the UK, so achieving the high quality that Philip is aiming for.

"Our slogan is great little clothes for great little people, and that is also why we only use 100 per cent natural and organic cotton for our T-shirts."

This is also going to be something that Philip's first child is going to enjoy when it enters the world.

Proud father-to-be Philip has absolutely no doubt that the tot will turn out to be a T-shirt fan.

"Yes of course, and it will be the perfect model!"



GETTING SHIRTY: Philip Shepherd with some of the jazzy designs PICTURE BY LEIGH QUINNELL