



### Top Stories

- ▶ Main Page
- ▶ **Saddam's Capture**
- ▶ **Sports**
- ▶ **Local**
- ▶ **Education**
- ▶ **Police/Courts/Fire**
- ▶ **Business/Auto/Public Notices**
- ▶ **Real Estate**
- ▶ **Government/Politics**
- ▶ **Automation Alley**
- ▶ **Obituaries**
- ▶ **Celebrations**
- ▶ **Environmental and Science**
- ▶ **Editorials and Opinions**
- ▶ **Sound Off**
- ▶ **Roads and Transportation**
- ▶ **Features**
- ▶ **Health and Medicine**
- ▶ **Entertainment**
- ▶ **Columnists**
- ▶ **Travel Column**
- ▶ **Voices of Disability**
- ▶ **Dream Cruise**
- ▶ **Wheels**
- ▶ **National Headlines**
- ▶ **Weather**
- ▶ **Personals**
- ▶ **Sports Wire!**
- ▶ **Personal Finance**
- ▶ **Consumer Guide**
- ▶ **Events & Contest**

## Main Page

### Tragedy leads to business idea for area woman

By LARA MOSSA , Of The Oakland Press

01/21/2002



Ann Mayle shows one of the tree hugger plaques she sells from her Rochester Hills Residence

January 21, 2002

When three high school students were killed in a car accident in 1996, Ann Mayle remembers thinking how nice it would be to honor them. From that germ, Mayle came up with the idea for Tree Huggers, which are commemorative plaques that attach to a tree. "I'd never thought about having my own business. It just hit me one day," said Mayle, who runs The Tree Hugger from her home. After the accident, she started sketching designs for her idea and talked with a forester and a metallurgist. She created the prototype for the 2-inch-by-6-inch plaque and found a distribution company in Chicago to do the engraving and shipping.

In 1999, Mayle started selling plaques and, in 2000, she received the trademark for The Tree Hugger, A Commemorative Tree Plaque. Her patent is pending.

"It's truly your living legacy, something that's going to be there for generations to come," she said. So far, she has sold 1,000 plaques for a variety of events including anniversaries, birthdays, new babies, weddings and memorials. Testimonials are on the company Web site. She also has used the product to raise money for schools, churches and hospitals.

The plaques are made of a high-grade stainless steel that withstands water and does not weep toxins. The plaques sell for \$39.95, plus \$4.95 for shipping and handling. Engraving is included for 25 characters a line, up to four lines.

The slowly building company was featured in Oprah magazine in December on Oprah's "O" list. Mayle sent about 50 news releases to newspapers and magazines. Since the December issue, she has received a few dozen orders.

"Our goal is to be in every back yard in America where families can plant their true family tree," she said.




- ▶ **Lifestyles**
- ▶ **Fun and Games**
- ▶ **About Us**
- ▶ **Michigan Lottery**

Mayle works full-time for Sher Distribution Co., a book distributor based in New Jersey. She is a single mother with an 11-year-old son, Joshua. She has a part-time administrator who helps with the business. Mayle does not expect to earn a profit on the idea until the end of this year.

*©The Oakland Press 2004*

---

Back to top 



E-mail this story  
to a friend

---

Copyright © 1995 - 2004 [PowerOne Media, Inc.](#) All Rights Reserved.

[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Homes](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Yellow Pages](#) | [Marketplace](#) | [Community](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [My Zwire!](#)