



LOCALLY GROWN: DR. SHELLY MANN WITH POTTY DUCK

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Welcome to Locally Grown! Locally grown introduces you to the people and stories behind local Lake County businesses. Today it is our pleasure to introduce you to Dr. Shelly Mann, co-owner of [Potty Duck](#).

Dr. Mann and I sat down at a local coffee shop to chat about potty training, as I am on the verge of going full-on “big girl pants” with my two-year-old. (Well, I wear big girl pants, but she is a bit apprehensive.) Dr. Mann was so very friendly and I understood right away why she is such a beloved pediatrician in Lake County. More than that, after bumping into an old colleague, Dr. Mann joined forces with her co-owner to bring the dream of Potty Duck to reality, a hands-on water toy that makes potty training fun and helps relieve the pressures of potty training.





Photo courtesy of Dr. Shelly Mann

Originally from Maryland, Dr. Mann attended school in Indiana where she met her husband. She was open to different areas of medicine, and while in what she thought would be her favorite rotation (obstetrics) she found herself being drawn to care for the baby rather than the mother. The growth potential of each child she saw was amazing and motivating. She has worked in other areas of medicine but has been here, in Grayslake as a pediatrician for the past 14 years. It makes sense, then, that her side business addresses one of the biggest milestones of growing up faced by parents: potty training.



Potty Duck

Potty Duck was developed by her co-owner when he was seeking a way to potty train his own (now grown) daughter. We have all heard that learning is done best through play, so he gave his daughter the opportunity to practice potty time with a toy. The toy duck is soft to squeeze and fills with water quickly, children are encouraged to hold the duck on the toy toilet and squeeze it to see the duck go potty. They can sit the duck on the blue and white toilet while they take a turn on their toilet, and can even flush the toy potty allowing the water to rain out of the bottom. It worked, and he kept sharing his idea. Many families praised his idea and on the fateful night he ran into Dr. Mann, it was a right place-right time moment and the idea took off.

Dr. Mann has many parents ask about potty training and encourages them to see it as a teaching experience. Potty Duck is an effective tool to ease the pressures of potty training. She reminded me that potty training is a parent-led milestone (most of the time) and just like while self-feeding we supply plates and silverware, we also supply the tools to potty train.



Photo Courtesy of Dr. Shelly Mann

When parents see that their child is ready to potty train, offering them the Potty Duck to control and manipulate themselves allows a better understanding of the potty process. She explained that often parents confuse readiness and willingness in potty training, and that causes much frustration. A child is ready when they show interest in the toilet, sit on the potty, and go 1 to 2 hours being dry; but being willing to potty train is a completely different concern.

One of my favorite statements Dr. Mann made during our discussion was that potty training can be frustrating, but it is just like walking or eating. We don't expect a child to walk the first time we set them on their feet or feed themselves perfectly the first time they are handed a spoon. We give them tools, such as a high chair, bowl and spoon, and we guide them as they learn to self-feed. Why do we expect potty training to be a one-day event? Why do we act so exasperated by the thought of our child peeing on the floor? Potty training is a learning experience that certainly takes time.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Shelly Mann

Most of parenting is about teaching our kids, and that is partially why Dr. Mann loves what she does so much. She lit up as she talked about raising her own, almost grown children, while reminiscing about their years in Grayslake. She explained how much she enjoys her town with great schools, easily accessible trails for biking, sports teams for her sons, and the community-oriented development of good people. It all comes down to teaching and developing these little humans, and potty training is one of the first big steps.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Shelly Mann

Get to know Dr. Shelly Mann next week as she sits in as our guest editor and brings you her picks for the week on [our Facebook Page](#) and in our [Newsletter](#).



Potty Duck

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Article by Alli

Alli is a boldly authentic mom to three- because who has time to fake it? She enjoys almost all things that moms get to do and strives to find joy in every day. Along with her supportive husband, Alli can be seen (or heard) around Lake County chasing runaway children, eating ice cream and holding someone's hand.

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