



14-year-old Truman Wilson is the creator of the Truman Bar, a chocolate with a code for online prizes.

## 14-YEAR-OLD TRUMAN WILSON IS THE NEXT WILLY WONKA

Truman Bars are chocolate bars that come with a special individual code to be entered online to win a prize — anything from a fidget spinner to a Nintendo Switch to a PlayStation.

“The original idea of the Truman Bar was to have a little box of chocolate with a physical prize, but we figured that might be hard to do,” Wilson says of his product. “So it evolved to having a chocolate bar with a code on it.”

A portion of the proceeds from Truman Bars go to Vogel Alcove, a nonprofit in Dallas that assists homeless children. At the moment, the candy bar is sold in about 50 stores around the North Texas area, but with emerging partnerships with companies like the Canopy Hotel and the We Work office chain, expect to soon see Truman products around the country.

Rachel Scott, an employee at Royal Blue Grocery, one of the locations Wilson sets up pop-ups to sell bars, says some kids who buy the bars turn out to be Truman’s own classmates.

“Probably the hardest part is getting the products made and getting them out there. It just takes a lot of time,” Wilson says, adding that he thinks more kids should attempt small businesses. “It’s just like a really good, fun experience.”

Wilson was 11 when he came up with the idea for the company. As he’s grown, so has his business, with a little help from his father.

“He’s seen me as an entrepreneur growing up and we do watch a lot of Shark Tank together as a family,” Derek says. “So when he came to me with the idea, it actually was a really good idea. So I figured I’d help him and see where this would go. During the day I’m working on kind of operations and then at night and on the weekends Truman and I kind of work on strategy together.”

The term “proud dad” doesn’t quite cover the magnitude of the senior Wilson’s delight in his son’s entrepreneurship.

“I love watching him sell, pitching the bars to people,” says Derek Wilson. “He does pop-ups at some of the retail locations on weekends and I think it’s really fun to watch him try to sell candy bars to strangers. And I’ve really enjoyed seeing him speak because I know he’s really nervous and it’s stressful for him. And I like to see older people’s reactions to him; they come up and they’re really impressed.”

Derek Wilson says that while his son’s story is uncommon, it’s not a rare occurrence for children to come up with bright and fresh business ideas, which should be encouraged.

“I think in general the kids in this age bracket are very prone to entrepreneur-ism,” says Derek. He notes that Stella Wrubel, a girl Truman grew up playing with since they were babies, is now running a nonprofit called Kiss and Tella, which sells mistletoe during Christmastime.

“They understand very fast that they can buy and sell things,” the elder Wilson adds. “And a lot of people they follow on social media have merch businesses online and they see that happening.”

Truman agrees, and sums up his business, and perhaps life, in a certain philosophy.

“If you have the idea, just do it,” he says.

“Everyone is going to have an idea or think of something, but to actually create something from nothing is a totally different decision,” says Derek Wilson. “And so far it’s been successful for Truman.”

Not surprisingly the 14-year-old gets a lot of comparisons to Willy Wonka, which he finds “kind of cool.”

His dreams do indeed mirror the iconic character’s. Twenty years from now, he says, “I’ll probably still be selling Truman Bars. But I want to have an actual Truman Factory where we make all of them.”

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JUST DO IT.” — TRUMAN WILSON**

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