

## **Today's Profile: Meghan Stein-Webster, Ecogeneration**

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*By Kristen Poland,  
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Meghan Stein-Webster simply lights up when she talks about her daughter, Clare.

“She’s so girly,” laughed Stein-Webster, a native Pittsburgher who’s fanatic about her Steelers. “I’m not sure where she gets it, but she’s only 2 and she refuses to go out if her clothes don’t match.”

Fortunately for Clare worrying about whether her pink polka dotted shirt compliments her green skirt is the extent of her clothing concerns. Thanks to her mom’s new business, eco-generation, Clare’s clothes (or at least her T-shirts) are free of chemicals and dyes that may be harmful to her skin. Eco-generation is a line of T-shirts with environmental messages that come in baby and toddler sizes. The shirts are made from organic cotton and printed with water-based ink.

At 33, Stein-Webster is vice president of U.S. Trust for Bank of America Private Wealth Management—a job she loves and doesn’t intend to leave in order to sell her products full-time. She prefers, instead, to balance her full-time job with this new venture—in addition to being a mom.

“I’m a very passionate person, and I think that is what allows me to manage a very hectic schedule,” Stein-Webster said. “Whether it’s assisting my clients at U.S. Trust, raising my daughter or creating a business that could raise awareness for environmental issues, my passion and drive to make a difference is what motivates me.”

Stein-Webster has always possessed a passion for the environment. That passion was heightened by two poignant events in her life, she said.

In 2002, Stein-Webster lost her father to leukemia, which doctors determined was caused by chemicals in the fertilizers and pesticides he used while gardening. Three years after her father’s death, Stein-Webster became pregnant and her own doctor warned her not to garden due to the levels of chemicals and pesticides in the dirt and the potential threat of exposure those pose to unborn children. She was also told not to eat certain fish because of high levels of mercury.

When Stein-Webster gave birth to Clare, she wanted to provide the very best for her tiny daughter, which inspired her to learn even more about how the environment is affected by chemicals and global warming. What she learned was that chemicals and dyes that could be harmful are present in everything from linens to clothing to foods.

“I didn’t like the idea of putting a new life in an unsafe environment,” Stein-Webster said. “Her room is very healthy. The bedding and bath towels are organic as well as her stuffed animals. I also try to find toys that are made out of wood and lots of books to limit the amount of plastic in the house. We also use eco-friendly laundry, body and household products to limit our exposure to strong chemicals, which if used, not only stay on your body but also go into the water system.”

While she was doing the best she could for her own family, Stein-Webster found that she wanted to have more of a widespread impact. She wanted to find a way to share what she’d learned with as many people as possible.

“My husband, friends and I sat around one night brainstorming about logos and messages about the environment and talking about where we’d like to see them,” Stein-Webster said.

Ultimately, she decided that T-shirts for babies and toddlers would be the best way to get her message out. The T-shirts are currently available in Whole Foods in Mount Pleasant, which is the first retailer to sell the shirts. The national launch will take place in boutiques in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Boston in March or April to coincide with Earth Day, which is April 22, 2008.

“The children can be little advocates,” Stein-Webster said. “After all, they’re the ones that will be affected by what we’re doing to the environment today.”

Watching and working through the process of transforming her product from idea to reality has been an enriching experience. Although she loves her career, she said this experience has been fulfilling in a very different way.

“When you go out and sell products for a company, even if you love the product, it isn’t yours,” Stein-Webster said. “When you’re selling your own product, your whole heart is in it.”

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