

IDAHO COMPANY BRINGS LUV TO THE GLOBAL TOY INDUSTRY

ABOUT IT'S ALIVE LABS, LLC. It's Alive Labs (IAL) is a Boise, Idaho, design and product development company created in 2015. Though consumers might consider the company's products "toys," IAL sees their products more as "animatronic life forms" that can learn, grow, evolve, interact, and connect with users. The company's most recent creation, Magic Mealtime Mia, brings the traditional feeding doll "play" into the technologically advanced interactive arena with sensing technology and related behaviors. Caleb Chung, the company's inventor, was a prolific creator of toys from the get-go and invented some classic McDonald's Happy Meal giveaways as well as the Furby, a famously fuzzy interactive electronic robotic character that could learn and evolve.

THE CHALLENGE. Chung discovered TechHelp, a member of the MEP National Network™, at the Boise State New Product Development Lab (NPD), in the early 2000s when he developed Pleo, a super cute baby dinosaur that begins its emotional and intellectual development as soon as you pull it out of the box. This collaboration led IAL to Travis Dean, a former student employee of the NPD Lab. Dean built experience in a variety of entrepreneurial ventures as well as larger engineering and manufacturing company environments. In his new position at IAL, Dean quickly engaged TechHelp's NPD Team to support the company's rapid prototyping needs.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. TechHelp collaborated with IAL to produce a scope of work that identified action items, timelines, and a budget. This proposal outlined how IAL would be an active participant in the design and prototyping process. IAL worked collaboratively with NPD to create the original Luvabella, an adorable interactive doll with lifelike facial expressions and movements. The doll can expand her vocabulary from baby babble to over 100 words and complete phrases! Luvabella has a distinct personality and comes with interactive accessories that give children the chance to care and play with a lifelike baby doll.

IAL's collaboration with TechHelp NPD students and specialists helped the company leverage the NPD Lab's diverse talent pool and technological resources. It quickly became apparent that additive manufacturing tools are irreplaceable in a fast-paced product development cycle. With the NPD Team's recommendation, IAL purchased a fleet of 3D printers and other lab-based assets to assist in design and development activities. Combining technical know-how, state of the art prototyping equipment, and talented design oriented engineering, the Luvabella product line has now expanded to Luvabella "Newborn" and the male version, Luvabeau.

"The TechHelp/NPD lab consistently goes beyond our expectations year after year. We have come to rely on their 3d printing and the engineering knowledge to support the continuing development of advanced materials and processes. This is a capital expense many small companies cannot make. Whatever is necessary to ensure the continuation and growth of this service has become a critical need for our success. Without them I don't know how we would have gotten off the ground."

-Caleb Chung, Co-Founder

RESULTS



\$2,200,000 in increased or retained sales



\$180,000 in new investment



\$72,000 in cost savings



6 created or retained jobs



The Luvabella baby doll expanded to Luvabella Newborn and the Luvabeau.

CONTACT US



Boise State University
1910 University Drive
Boise, ID 83725-1656



(208)426-3767



www.techhelp.org

TECHHELP
Idaho Manufacturing Specialists