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April 26, 2007

Spanish DVDs speak to East Valley kids

HAYLEY RINGLE, TRIBUNE

Sisters and best friends Krisse Brock Kelly and Julie Brock Campbell are sharing their passion for the Spanish language by trying to make it easier for children to learn Spanish.

Watch video

The two started Brock Sisters Productions and spent the past year and a half making "Kids Love Spanish," a seven-part DVD series geared toward the 1- to 8-year-old crowd.

"When children are exposed to a foreign language, they become more creative and do better in school," said Campbell, 35, a Mesa mom of four.

"It gives them a love for a different world, a different language," said Kelly, 33, a Scottsdale mom.

Spanish was a daily part of their lives when growing up in El Centro, Calif., just 15 minutes from Mexicali, Mexico.

Their family farms asparagus and needed to know Spanish to talk with the migrant farmers. Kelly and Campbell studied abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico, along with other family members.

By the time they graduated from high school, both were fluent in Spanish. Kelly studied in Santiago, Chile, and received a master's degree in bilingual education from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

She went on to become a bilingual teacher in California, and after receiving another master's in administration, was a bilingual principal in Bellflower, Calif.

Campbell graduated from the University of Arizona with a minor in Spanish, and was working in computer sales daily with Spanish-speaking clients from Miami and Puerto Rico.

After Kelly's son, Cameron, now 2, was born, she wanted to teach him Spanish right away. She couldn't find any Spanish learning videos available for kids that kept them engaged, so she decided to make her own.

"It truly is a benefit for kids to know another language," Kelly said. "This also gives us a chance to share our passion with everyone else."

The videos are a family affair. Kelly and Campbell sing, dance and repeat Spanish words in the videos, along with 75 East Valley kids, neighbors and family members. Campbell's 8-year-old son Brock, a second-grader from Highland Elementary School, is on the cover and is prominently featured in the videos.

Brock said it was "terrific" being in the videos, and he just liked being with his friends and memorizing the words. He also said it's important to know a second language.

"What if you lived in a place where no one speaks English. If you know Spanish you'll have tons of friends," said Brock, who is featured alongside his two brothers, 3-year-old Morgan and 2-year-old Hayden.

The videos are live action, with some animation. Cacto, the Spanish word for cactus, is an animated character that shows up frequently in the film and is voiced by Campbell's husband, Brad.

"Parents appreciate that it's not all animated," said Kelly, whose husband, Chris, was also involved in the videos. "It's educational and fun."

The seven themed 30-minute videos cover basic words, ABCs and 123s, family, food, colors and shapes, animals and basic phrases, and went on sale in January. The videos are \$17.99 each, or \$99.99 for the set.



Julie Brock Campbell of Mesa, left, and Krisse Brock Kelly of Scottsdale have created a new DVD series called "Kids Love Spanish," to teach children Spanish.

Laura Segall, For the Tribune

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