

# Internet In Our Lives

## Housewife Invents New Internet Game

(NAPSA)—If you play games over the Internet, you have lots of company. Michelle Kaplan, for one. Like many women, Kaplan plays games on her home computer to relax after a long day. But somehow, the typical games she found online just didn't seem right to her. Most of them pitted players against each other to win points, status or prizes.

"It seemed to me that the games I played were better suited for young men that like to slay monsters or make touchdowns," she says. "But I'm just not like that. I socialize with my friends by helping them, not competing with them. The last thing I needed was more stress in my life."

So she got the idea to build a different kind of game—one where people cooperate, rather than compete, to help each other win. Working with her husband, a computer engineer, she came up with a new type of game where people can win prizes faster if they work together. The result was Winster.com—where, as it says on the Web site, "friends help friends win free prizes."

"I wanted games that people would play WITH each other rather than AGAINST each other to encourage cooperation instead of competition. Then I realized players could help each other win prizes. That's when it all came together."

### More Like A Coffee Klatch

"Winster is more like a coffee klatch than a game site," she explains. "People make new friends quickly and easily because they aren't trying to beat each other. Helping out other people is much more fun than you might think."

Kathleen Valentino, a regular Winster member, says, "Due to health reasons, I am housebound, which can be very isolating. Since I started playing Winster, I have found a network of friends to



**Sometimes, mothers make the best inventions. One housewife came up with Winster.com, an Internet game where people cooperate, rather than compete.**

socialize and play fun games with."

To date, the husband-and-wife team has created 10 games to choose from. To play on Winster.com, you pick a prize such as movie tickets, pizza coupons and chocolates, then solve puzzles until you earn enough points to collect your winnings. The trick is that players can help each other solve their puzzles.

### A Hobby Turns Into A Business

What started as a home project in their garage quickly grew into a real business. Her husband Jerry now manages a team of Silicon Valley engineers building Winster games. "Who knew this would be such a big deal?" he says. "We've had hundreds of thousands of people play games at Winster.com, spending many hours each day making friends, winning prizes and just plain having fun."

Valentino concludes, "It has been very difficult for me to stay connected with my friends outside my home. Now, I play Winster with old friends and continue to meet new friends as well. I finally feel like I have my social life back."

To learn more, visit [www.winster.com](http://www.winster.com).