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Teen Entre-Purr-neur Steps Up for Animals

14-year-old's Faux Paws flip-flop business raises funds for big cats, homeless pets



• Zoe, surrounded by her Faux Paws flip-flops, is happy to be helping animals in need. Z. Albert

Zoe Albert may sell flip-flops to benefit animals, but she certainly doesn't flip-flop on how she feels about animals. She thinks wearing real animal fur is a big faux pas—so all of her creations are fur-free and fabulous!

It began with a visit to her local hobby store, where 11-year-old Zoe purchased a pair of plain flip-flops and some faux fur fabric. She made her first pair of furry sandals and wore them around town. Soon her friends wanted their own, and word quickly spread. When it was time for Zoe to do her bat mitzvah project, her parents gave her a small \$100 loan, and Faux Paws was born!

The clever name for her business came when Zoe asked her mother what "faux pas" meant and learned that it was like making a mistake. Zoe thought that was perfect because, she explains, as an animal lover, "I think it is a faux pas for people to wear animal fur!"

Going wild for Faux Paws

Her stylish one-of-a-kind designs come in leopard print or zebra stripe faux fur on black or white soles. In the beginning, Faux Paws were sold by word of mouth, at local

animal adoption fairs, and at Safari Kids, a local boutique in Texas. Later, when her dad helped her set up a website, fauxpaws.biz, Faux Paws went national, and Zoe turned her mother's office into a flip-flop factory.

Zoe estimates that it takes about twenty minutes to make each pair. She once received an order for eighteen pairs of sandals to be delivered the next day for a Cheetah Girl-themed birthday party. She stayed up until early the next morning cutting and sewing. Even though last-minute birthday parties are not the norm, she must occasionally contend with little sleep to stay on top of the growing number of orders, all while maintaining her straight-A grade point average and playing clarinet in her school band. It's all worth it for Zoe, who says, "I get a lot of satisfaction knowing that my Faux Paws are making a difference."

It's been three years since Zoe sewed her first pair of Faux Paws, and though she estimates that she's earned about \$10,000 so far in profit, Zoe hasn't kept a dime for herself. She donates all of her proceeds to animal advocacy organizations that care for big cats and homeless animals. Read more about Zoe and Faux Paws on [HumaneTeen!](#)

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