

Lake Forest pair to make a pitch on premiere of TV's 'Quit your day job'

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Appearing on a reality TV show can be life-changing. For Lake Forest couple Jared and Karina Rabin, landing a spot on Oxygen's new "Quit Your Day Job" could be a lifesaver.

Jared, 36, and Karina, 37, will be featured during the series premiere today. Similar to the popular pitch show "Shark Tank" on ABC, the Oxygen show offers aspiring, young business owners the opportunity to pitch inventions and ideas to a panel of investors.

Jared Rabin created the Hang-O-Matic, a product that helps people install shelves, picture frames or artwork with ease.

While most startups on the show will vie for an investment deal and product recognition, for Karina, it could mean a longer life.

A costly transplant

Karina Rabin, who was born in Russia, suffers from polycystic kidney disease. It's one of the most common life-threatening genetic diseases in the U.S., mostly affecting adults. When her kidney fails, Karina said, her only chance of survival would be a costly transplant.

"There's no chemo; there's no treatment for it," said Karina, who has a 3-year-old son and a baby boy on the way. "There is a guarantee you are going to die, because your kidneys will fail."

By sharing her story on the show, Karina is hopeful more people will become aware of PKD, which has a foundation dedicated to finding a cure and treatment for the condition.

The invention

Jared Rabin was a 20-year-old student at UC San Diego when he invented the Hang-O-Matic.

It was borne of his own frustration. While moving from dorm to dorm, he would use a piece of dental floss and a level to help him mark two exact points for nails.

Not long after filing a couple of patents and creating some prototypes for his creation, he met Karina.

"His parents gave us a snow globe that had their wedding anniversary on it," Karina said. "I was hanging the shelf, and then we put the snow globe on it, and we watched it slide and crash. It shattered. The shelf was crooked."

Jared broke out his prototype. Back then it was a zip tie with two nails on either end. The device helped them quickly and properly hang the shelf.

The couple went on to finalize the Hang-O-Matic design and launch it as a business. They ran into some bumps along the road, mostly in the form of scams and ripoffs.

“It was a long journey,” Jared said.

They lost around \$80,000.

The couple got a home equity loan and Karina cashed in her 401(k) before getting the Hang-O-Matic into major retailers.

The Hang-O-Matic sells for \$15 online. It’s available at Amazon and Home Depot and Lowe’s online. It also can be bought at Wal-Mart, the Container Store, Brookstone and Michaels. The Rabins hope to expand by having the product available in big-box stores including Target and Bed Bath & Beyond.

After launching Hang-O-Matic, Karina quit her full-time job to focus on working for the product and raising her son. By going on the show, she hopes to inspire women by showing them it’s possible to simultaneously co-own a business and be a full-time mom.

“There are opportunities for women to do both,” she said. “I feel fortunate that I’m a stay-at-home in the morning and a full-time business owner by the afternoon.”

That should resonate with Oxygen’s audience of mostly younger women.

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