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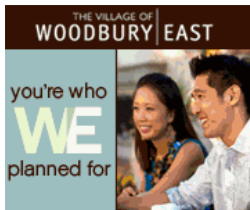
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INVESTMENTS

## Tech Coast Angels funds online virtual world for kids

Masher Media has 'exceptional market opportunity,' says TCA.

BY KRISTEN SCHOTT

Published: August 09, 2009 09:55 AM



Tech Coast Angels is putting its investment in Masher Media Inc. – the developer of a new online virtual world for children – on the fast track to success.

Calabasas-based Masher Media first presented MyMiniPeeps.com – which will offer children ages 6 to 13 social networking opportunities, multiplayer content and innovative online real-world experiences – to TCA last month and received notice of its investment of \$300,000 on July 31. The nation's largest angel investment network, which has a local arm in Irvine, is holding the current round of funding open for a total of \$500,000 over the next month. The move is due to a high level of interest, according to TCA.

"Even in this difficult economy, Masher Media is a good example of how a great new company with an exceptional market opportunity can get investment money and get it fast," says TCA President Richard Sudek.

The decision to investment in Masher Media was an easy one, according to TCA founder Luis Villalobos. He says the power behind the project is CEO Sherry Gunther, who produced popular animated shows like Fox's "The Simpsons" and "Family Guy."

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Masher Media's MyMiniPeeps.com, continued ...



"As investors, first and foremost we bet on people, and Sherry Gunther, the founder and creative genius behind Masher Media is one of the most accomplished people in her industry," he continues. "Moreover, Masher Media has a terrific concept in a fast-growing market."

Business is booming for the children's virtual world industry: It reached more than \$1 billion in revenue last year, and the number of users is expected to leap from 186 million in 2009 to 640 million by 2015, according to TCA. And MyMiniPeeps.com expands on the virtual environment for kids, offering new, polished content and 3-D graphics. Among the features of the secure and parent-authorized Web site: Children can role play, work within communities and create new worlds and content.

"There's a real opportunity for us, the content drivers, and our young users to innovate together to shape a new online experience," says Gunther.

Tech Coast Angels' members provide funding and guidance to more early-stage, high-growth companies in Southern California than any other investment group, according to the firm. Members invest in businesses ranging from life sciences to retail to software to tech startups. The group has more than 250 members in five networks within the L.A., O.C., San Diego, Westlake/Santa Barbara and the Inland Empire areas.

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