

This seasons **HOT** toys!

By Jessica Long

A surge in product recalls and a growing social conscience are driving this year's hottest, got-to-have specialty toys for Christmas and other winter holidays.

On the high-end, one of the

most popular products flying off the shelves at Totally Thomas Toy Depot in Carmel Mountain Ranch is the Karito Kids dolls. The 21-inch tall dolls retail for about \$120 and are designed for elementary-age girls.

Karito Kids have won a slew of parenting and toy-design awards primarily because instead of just another doll, these dolls come with an adventure book and code that

allows recipients to go online and "make a difference."

For every Karito Kids doll purchased, its manufacturer makes a donation to a kids charity.

"It's trying to teach kids to give ... teaching them that they can make a difference so as they grow up, they carry that lesson with them — it's really just the neatest thing," said Cindy Wyatt, owner of Totally Thomas Toy Depot in Carmel Mountain Ranch.

Available charities serve the needs of children worldwide, a fitting touch for a doll line that offers dolls in at least five nationalities: Lulu from Nairobi, Kenya; Pita from Mexico City; Gia from Florence, Italy; Zoe from New York City; and Wan Ling from Shanghai, China.