

## Toy Buzz: Giving Back Pays Off for Karito Kids Dolls Celebrate Diversity and Lend a Helping Hand

By [Terri Hughes-Lazzell](#)  
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When Lisa Steen Proctor and Laura Rangel began planning their company, [KidsGive LLC](#), in 2005, they knew they wanted to accomplish more than giving a toy. They also wanted to help kids celebrate diversity and learn to give to others, Laura, the company's president, told **TDmonthly Magazine**.

**“When you come to something with a passion and a mission, like we did with our dream for this company ... then good things happen.” — Laura Rangel, KidsGive**



Karito Kids

The 21” Karito Kids dolls have accomplished that, and more. Each of the five dolls is ethnically accurate, designed to represent features of African, Asian, Caucasian, Latin and Mediterranean ethnicities. They are accompanied by books with stories that take place in each girl's home country.

Additionally, a percentage of the purchase price of Karito Kids dolls and other products goes to support children's charity Plan USA, via the child registering at the KidsGive website and choosing the project of her choice.

### HOLLYWOOD TAKES NOTICE

That charitable aspect caught the eye of celebrities this year, bringing even more attention to the company and its work within months of launching.

The fanfare began in July 2007 when the dolls were featured at a tea party given by Brooke Shields for her daughter. The event was covered by *In Style* magazine, and Oprah later gave KidsGive a plug in her own publication.

Furthermore, the upcoming “Sex and the City” movie by Newline Cinemas may include the five dolls, Laura, president of KidsGive, told **TDmonthly**. The company was asked to send the dolls for the shoot and they might be shown in the bedroom of Charlotte's adopted daughter from China. Newline Cinemas had no comment at the time of publication.

### A GOOD MISSION BRINGS GOOD THINGS

“Like everything else, it's almost surreal,” Laura told **TDmonthly**. “When you come to something with a passion and a mission, like we did with our dream for this company, what we wanted to do for kids, then good things happen.”

Some of those good things, in addition to the celebrity status the dolls have acquired, include the team that worked on the projects: former Disney animators illustrated the books, which were written by Edgar Award-winning novelist Walter Sorrells, and renowned doll sculptor Andrea Hollis created the doll molds.

“The core people are just falling into place,” Laura told **TDmonthly**. “And we brought on a third partner, Dave Davis, who came from Electronic Arts.”



Karito Kids Maxi Style

## SUCCESS FROM THE START



Karito Kids World Collection

The dolls debuted in January at the IDEX show and then at Toy Fair the next month. The official public launch was July 23, and the response since then has been overwhelming, Laura said.

She noted that since the beginning, it has seemed like the company just took off by itself. “When you do the right thing, it all seems to fall into place.”

“We wanted our mission of love, charity and being good neighbors, the diversity of all and the beauty of that diversity, to be behind all of this. And it’s worked,” she added.

Two new dolls, as well as new accessories, outfits and books, will join the dolls at Toy Fair 2008. But the focus of celebrating diversity and helping others will remain, keeping the company grounded in the mission it began.

Here are some Karito Kids dolls and accessories:

### Karito Kids Pita – Mexico City by [KidsGive](#)

Pita from Mexico City is the youngest of five children born into an ultra-conservative, affluent Mexican family. She is being raised by nannies, domestic servants, security guards and chauffeurs. Over time, she discovers how fortunate she is through exposure to the staff’s less fortunate side of life. Pita lives for the days they go to the family ranch in Cuernavaca where she can ride her beloved Estrella. Tragedy strikes when Estrella is stolen, and it’s up to Pita to get her back. Launch date: July/August 2007. 3/19/2007 (Price: \$99.99; Age: 6 and Up) [[Add to my Inquiry Basket](#)][?]



### Karito Kids Zoe – New York City by [KidsGive](#)

Zoe from New York City is oh-so bohemian. She loves designing her own fashion flair taken from local flea markets, which she self-proclaims as the “Zoe” factor. Zoe’s father passed away when she was 7, but Zoe maintains a bright and positive outlook on life. Since her father’s death, her family is strapped for cash — causing her and her mother to move from the place she loves the most. Zoe discovers a possibility of finding the secret to staying in the Big Apple. Launch date: July/August 2007. ( [Watch Video](#)) 3/19/2007 (Price: \$99.99; Age: 6 and Up) [[Add to my Inquiry Basket](#)][?]

### Shanghai Secret: Another Karito Kids Adventure by [KidsGive](#)

Written at the fourth- to fifth-grade reading level and blending fiction and non-fiction, this 152-page book introduces Wan Ling from Shanghai, China, as she attempts to solve a mystery at the zoo. Readers can experience a combination of landscapes, cultures, celebrations and beliefs alongside beautiful illustrations and a full-color scrapbook with fun facts. The doll-and-book starter package is available for \$99.99. Laura Rangel of KidsGive told **TDmonthly** the books are “linked to the Karito Kids website where readers can activate their donation, extend their reading experience and continue the adventure as well. By playing mini-games such as Hidden Quest and Culture Crossings, readers can earn currency called ‘World Change,’ which is then converted to a real world donation to our partner charity.” Launch date: July/August 2007. 2/23/2007 (Price: \$10.95; Age: 8 to 11) [[Add to my Inquiry Basket](#)][?]





**Karito Kids Lulu - Nairobi, Kenya** by [KidsGive](#)

Meet Lulu from Nairobi. She is one of the luckiest girls in the world since her mother is host of a kids' talk show and Lulu is a co-host. She knows that she is fortunate in a land of people whose basic necessities are not met. Discovering it's important to stand behind who you are and what you believe gives her confidence, not only on the soccer field, but in life. 1/24/2007 (Price: \$99.99; Age: 6 and Up) [[Add to my Inquiry Basket](#)][?]

**Karito Kids Ling - Shanghai, China** by [KidsGive](#)

Meet Ling from Shanghai. She is a typical little girl living in a big city. She has just had to move to Shanghai since her father has accepted a position as the panda expert for the zoo. Follow along with her on her adventures in saving the pandas in "Shanghai Secret."  
— Amanda Forrest, a **TDmonthly** Dolls Roundtable mom, said, "This is the girls' favorite. They play with it almost every day." 1/24/2007 (Price: \$99.99; Age: 6 and Up) [[Add to my Inquiry Basket](#)][?]



**Karito Kids Gia - Italy** by [KidsGive](#)

Meet Gia from Florence. She is a beautiful girl who lives in her family's pensione with her parents and older sister. She is absolutely in love with fashion and has her heart set on working in the fashion industry one day. 1/24/2007 (Price: \$99.99; Age: 6 and Up) [[Add to my Inquiry Basket](#)][?]