



When Julie Hill and Lisa Welch became college suitemates in 1991, it never entered their minds that years later they'd be running a company together.

It all started with Welch's quest for athletic wear during her first pregnancy in late 2002. An active woman, Welch was excited to shop for stylish maternity active wear, but found that her choices were limited...and not suitable for exercise. "I wanted something I could sweat in, and there just wasn't anything out there," explains Welch, who studied marketing at CSU. Immediately she saw a business opportunity.

And so BornFit was, well, born.

Soon Welch partnered up with Hill, and while juggling motherhood, new babies and other responsibilities, the ladies managed to turn Welch's idea into reality. Though it was certainly a learn-as-they-went kind of venture, Welch often tapped her sales and business background (she'd worked for her family's real estate business for eight years) and Hill's experience as the assistant athletic director at the University of Northern Colorado was also invaluable. Before long, BornFit was manufacturing overseas and the business was taking off. In the spring of 2007, BornFit became available in stores.



What started as a maternity athletic wear company quickly turned into something more. "We focused on the maternity market initially, but once our clothing hit stores, we realized that most of our buyers weren't even pregnant, but just liked the comfort and feel of our clothes," says Hill. "Now, we're developing a relaxed fit line in addition to our maternity line."

From the beginning, Welch and Hill have attempted to make BornFit more than just another apparel company. "We want to motivate and empower women to do great things," explains Welch. Each month, they feature one inspirational mom on their website, and Welch is a frequent speaker at locations where their products are sold. And their commitment to give back and "pay it forward" isn't just lip service. Every month, BornFit donates 10% of profits to a cause that's touched their lives, be it a charity or a mom in need, like the mother of four fighting breast and lung cancer that Welch met recently at her son's preschool.

So what does the future hold for BornFit? "We want to continue to grow nationwide and internationally," says Welch. To make it happen, the ladies recently hired their first employee—not surprisingly, another CSU alumna. Jamie Evavold, a May 2008 apparel design graduate, now

serves as the third set of hands at BornFit, helping with everything from the day-to-day operations of the business to designing future clothing lines.



While growth is certainly a major objective, Welch says that it is equally important for BornFit to continue to support and encourage women to be active throughout their lives. Hill agrees, adding, "We know how rewarding but also challenging it is to be a mother. Our goal is to inspire confidence in women of all ages. We're really passionate about that."

BornFit clothing is sold on the company's website (www.BornFit.com), across the country and in a number of local stores, including Runner's Roost, Boulder Running Company, Becoming Mothers, Fleet Feet Sports and online at Lucy, Title Nine and Nordstrom.