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THE BUSINESS OF TOYS

Boise team brings new item to market

Co-inventor Caleb Chung, the man behind Furby, created the Poof Fling Flyer with Doug Gaus

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After five years honing a design for a soft projectile toy, Boise inventors Caleb Chung and Doug Gaus will see their creation on toy store shelves this spring.

Chung previously invented successful toy robots Furby, which sold millions of units, and Pleo the dinosaur, which sold 100,000 units.

The new toy, Poof Fling Flyer, will make its debut at Toy Fair 2016 in New York City. The three-day industry showcase starts Saturday.

Poof Fling Flyer will be manufactured and distributed by Alex Brands, which licensed the design from Gaus. The company is based in Fairfield, N.J., and makes and distributes products in a wide swath of markets, including bath, furniture, arts and crafts, and toys.

The toy includes a hand-held launcher and a soft, foam, football-shaped missile. Gaus said it flies farther than the similar Nerf N-Sports Vortex Aero Howler.

Chung is a veteran of the toy-invention scene. His Furby, the hamster or owl-like toy robot from the late 1990s, sold more than 50 million units worth \$1.2 billion.

He also invented Pleo, a baby dinosaur robot that manufacturing company Ugobe said racked up \$20 million in sales before the company filed for bankruptcy in 2009.

Gaus said he reached out to Chung for mentorship. The pair met occasionally to talk shop over coffee before working together on the concept.

“Caleb Chung is one of the best inventors out there,” Gaus said. “I searched him out in my early days of inventing, and he agreed to mentor me on my projects.”

The pair worked on the Poof Fling Flyer together for six weeks in 2011. Chung assigned his half interest in the project to Gaus to pursue further. Gaus said he alone licensed it to Alex Brands.

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Provided by Innovation in Mind

The Poof Fling Flyer by Alex Brands will sell for \$15.