

California boy makes a business of turning old skateboards into new ones

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Carson Kropfl, 11, shows off his Locker Board in San Clemente, California, October 13, 2016. Leonard Ortiz/Orange County Register/TNS

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif. — Carson Kropfl, an 11-year-old from San Clemente, has come up with a product idea. He thinks young skateboarders like himself around the country will like it.

What if you could buy a form of transportation that could fit in your backpack and inside your locker at school?

What if you could even do tricks on it?

Meet the Locker Board.

A Smaller Version Of The Original

With the support of his mother, Carrie, and his father, Keith, Carson has begun recycling old skateboard decks into smaller new skateboards, which he refined by trial and error into 14-inch-long, rideable rounded cubes.

With practice, a young skater can cruise on Locker Board with ease, and even do kick flips, Carson said.

He is offering each reshaped deck, with a repainted bottom, for \$20. As a member of a family of people who start their own businesses, Carson is taking a cue from his mother. She created a tarp surfing kit called Streetubez. Tarp surfing is riding a skateboard on a plastic or cloth tarpaulin sheet that is held in the shape of a curve.

"He has big dreams," his mother said. "He wants to set up an online store. I think it's going to be a hit. All the kids at Shorecliffs [Middle School] want one." She thinks her son's idea could go far.

He'd Rather Build A Brand Than Do Chores

"My mom said I had to pay for all my surf contests and surf lessons," Carson said. "She said I have to do chores around the house to earn money, and I hate doing chores. So I thought of making a brand like my mom has with Streetubez."

Carson's website invites donations to help his business get started. He is not asking for money, just used skateboards, to help him meet a goal of creating and selling 200 decks by year's end.

Skate shop Republik of Kalifornia has donated 20 skateboard decks.

Vans Shoes' Steve Van Doren took notice after seeing Carson's video. He offered to ask people he knew in the skateboard industry to donate some used decks.

"That is an awesome design," Van Doren said. "How innovative he is. There's always new things in skateboarding."

Finding The Right Size Took Trial And Error

If it's a mystery why no one thought of doing this before, Carson's mother said maybe it's because no one thought a skater could ride a board this small.

"When he measured his locker, he said, 'It's small, I don't know how this is going to work,'" said Carson's mother. "It has become such a fun ride."

It took experimenting to come up with a size and shape that worked.

"At first, we had the boards kind of like a normal skateboard with the round edges and the tail," Carson said. "The tail would make it wiggly and it wouldn't really work, so I cut off the tail but kept the round shape. It still didn't really work. It was too small to fit your feet on. So I thought to just cut the board into a block and round the edges."

The Orders Are Rolling In

He said he has taken Locker Board to school without hassle. “You just can’t ride them during school,” he said, but that’s OK.

“It’s mainly for cruising around after school and everywhere,” he said. “You can really have fun with it. You can take it to the beach.”

He said he already has a backlog of orders. “Everybody’s saying, ‘These are amazing, when can we get them?’” he said.