

Mom the Builder



Name: Melissa Laing

Hometown: Plymouth Township, Michigan

Company: Tomboy Tools

Kids: Brennan, 3;
Audrey, 6 months

Parties Per Month: One or two

Income: About \$330 per month

➔ **HOW IT HAPPENED** I accidentally put a hole in one of our walls. My father-in-law came over and showed me how to repair the drywall, and I thought, "Hey, that was pretty easy and kind of fun too!" Shortly after that, I happened to see an ad for Tomboy Tools—it's a company that sells tools specifically sized for women's hands—and I wondered, "Is that something I could do?" I work mornings in an office, but I wanted a way to make some extra money.

➔ **PUTTING IT TOGETHER** The hostess chooses a project that she either needs to have done at her house or one that she's interested in learning about, and I go and demonstrate how to do it and what tools to use. For the very first party I hosted, my friend wanted to repair drywall and add trim molding. I already knew how to do the drywall, so I just watched the video from the company on putting up trim molding, and I was ready. The party was a total blast.

➔ **SCHOOL FOR TOOLS** I've done faux finishing, laid mosaic tile, and taught Tool School 101, where women learn about different hand tools. My favorite client was a 70-year-old woman



who wanted to learn how to use a circular power saw. Afterward, she said if someone had shown her how to use it earlier, she'd have been able to do more around her home after her husband died. The coolest thing is that in my son's eyes, I can fix anything. He sees me making things in the garage, and if something's broken, he'll say, "Mom can fix this." And I don't have to say, "Oh, we'll wait for Daddy to get home."

➔ **BROKEN RECORD** This past fall, one of my parties broke the all-time Tomboy Tools record for high sales in a single party. The previous record was around \$1,600, and my party made \$3,013. I'm confident that I'll keep making more and more money.