

Peas of Mind available nationwide

The frozen food sections of grocery stores throughout the U.S. are at "peas" today with the first widespread availability of Peas of Mind Puffets. These nutritionally-balanced, all-in-one meals made free of artificial flavors, added sugar, or preservatives, and chock full of whole, organic ingredients, are ideal for children as young as 12 months. Parents in states from Alabama to Wisconsin seeking solutions to the time-crunched demands of today's family meals no longer have to compromise taste and nutrition for convenience and speed.

Peas of Mind sprouted from the idea that as toddlers begin eating solid foods, the tastes and textures they experience shape their eating habits for a lifetime. The company's Puffets – vegetarian mini casseroles containing organic ingredients that can be heated and ready to eat within minutes – offer the healthiest choices from the food pyramid. Each homemade Puffet recipe is specifically designed for the growing needs and palate of the "post-baby." Puffets are firm enough to be cut into pieces to promote self-feeding, but are made with softeners (eggs and milk) to make each bite easy to chew and swallow.

Current Puffet flavors include "Eat Your Greens," "Carrot Risotto," "Black Bean Polenta" and "Nanna's Banana." The unique combination of ingredients provides a balanced nutritional meal that is easy to prepare and easy to eat with little hands. Each Puffet is individually wrapped, fully cooked, and they are sold four to a box. Three of the four flavors are gluten-free.

First created and introduced to Bay Area consumers nearly three years ago, Peas of Mind has steadily increased distribution throughout California and the West, recently expanding into Arizona, Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho and Illinois. As of today, Peas of Mind is additionally carried in Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Texas, South Carolina, Virginia and Wisconsin. Peas of Mind is available at retailers such as Whole Foods Market and SuperTarget, and the complete list of retailers is available at www.peasofmind.com.

Founder Jill Litwin was first inspired to start cooking for kids when she witnessed a friend feeding her young child a meal of canned green beans. "I just couldn't believe there wasn't anything available for moms to buy that didn't come from a can or contain artificial flavorings or unhealthy preservatives," said Litwin.

Inspired, Litwin asked if she could cook for her friend's son, Satchel, and created unique, all-in-one, healthy toddler meals, which soon caught on. The local mothers in Burlington, Vt., were asking for Litwin's services and she knew she was onto something. Litwin began in-depth research and realized that there was a real gap in the marketplace for her niche product. She made the decision to pursue her passion full-time and moved to Northern California, where she could find the freshest, all-natural, organic ingredients and a large audience of busy, health-conscious parents. She developed her Puffet concept and recipes at La Cocina, a non-profit shared-use, commercial kitchen and business incubator in the Mission district of San Francisco.

Every month Litwin expands on the Puffet by creating a "Reci-Pea" for visitors to the company's website and readers of the Peas of Mind electronic newsletter. February's heart-healthy Reci-Pea for Edamame Stuffed Puffets features edamame (soy beans), roasted garlic and goat cheese. Past Reci-Peas encouraging Puffet creativity include Puffets a la Mode, Caramel Apple Puffets, and Puffet Pot Pies. Adults seem to enjoy Puffets as much as kids, often heating them up for a quick, healthy snack.

With exposure everywhere from NBC Nightly News to the New York Times, Litwin says the response from consumers has been overwhelming. With the ever-increasing demand for the product, she plans to introduce two new flavors in early 2008, both of which will be dairy-free.