

## Jumping Jacks Improves Shoes

Jumping Jacks has introduced the Classmate Lace and Classmate Velcro athletic shoes for back-to-school 2010 based on its previously launched Scholar and Prodigy styles.

But rather than continue with the same pattern, the brand improved its design, according to



Ron Dillehay

Ron Dillehay, national sales manager of Munro & Company, which produces shoes for school uniform programs and other markets under the Jumping Jacks label. "We based the new styles on a good shoe,

and made it even better," he said. "In addition to cementing the bottom of the shoe to the top, we stitched it across the toe with channel stitching, which means we cut a little groove into the unit at the toe so that the stitching doesn't touch any surface. That makes the shoes very, very durable. We also added small perforations across the front, making them very breathable."

Both Classmate children's styles are unisex and retail for \$39.95. Adult versions are also available at a retail price of \$43.95. The shoes start at a children's size 8.5 and run up to a men's size 12. They are available in black and white versions.

Dillehay described the Classmate collection's design as appropriate for both genders. "These are classic styles that look athletic without being 'too busy,' and look great on both girls and boys," he said. "We have already noticed that they are being very well-received in the marketplace. We have also been able to lower the price from previous seasons."

Overall, Dillehay described the uniform market as highly successful for Munro & Company. "Our uniform division has been very strong, and it continues to be a growing part of our business," he said. "We're seeing increases throughout the west, south and northeast."

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—A.T.

## Classroom Reports 2010 Success

Andy Beattie, senior vice president of Strategic Partners' school and service apparel division, said the company's school uniform business has been very strong for 2010. "In comparison to last season, we are having an excellent fall 2010 season with our moderately-priced yet



Ron Dillehay

better-quality products," he said. "I'm finding that the school uniform business on the whole is strong [for 2010] as many of our retailers are also seeing increases."

Beattie reported that the company, which sells school uniforms under its Classroom brand, has received many calls in the last three months from retailers who are adding school uniforms to their assortment late in the season because of new demand in their communities. He attributed this to the fact that an increasing number of public and charter schools, as well as private schools, are implementing dress code programs.

Classroom school uniforms wholesale from \$5 to \$8 for tops and \$9 to \$12 for bottoms. Sizes start at Toddler and run through an adult sizes. "We are unique as one of the only school manufacturers with comprehensive offerings that go all the way through adult sizes," he remarked. "This allows us to cover students all the way from the preschoolers to the seniors."

In product successes, Beattie reported that the low-rise pant and short for girls that Classroom launched approximately 18 months ago has been extremely successful. As a result, the brand will expand on that category for 2011 with new twill and stretch twill offerings.

Beattie described these products as popular because they are not extremely low-rise, but offer a contemporary fit that young women recognize as similar to their streetwear. "The [low-rise products] do not seem to be taking away from our classic flat-front business, but only bring in

additional dollars," he said. "Some private schools have moved into this pant because they can present a more contemporary look while still having a uniform program. As a reaction the low-rise, we've lengthened the torso on all of our female polo shirts so they can be tucked in."

For boys, Classroom has slimmed down its traditional pleated pant to give it a more contemporary look.

Offering school-appropriate yet fashion-forward styling is key to Classroom's success, according to Beattie. "You have to present a traditional look, but you need to also offer some fashionable styling. It is important to keep styles fresh and wearable while still maintaining the purpose for which they were intended," he said.

In other news, Classroom has revamped its consumer site, ClassroomUniforms.com, and its business-to-business site, ClassroomUniforms.biz. The consumer site, which went live in late July, now includes information on the industry and on school uniform programs for school districts. ClassroomUniforms.biz now features real-time ordering capabilities 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Beth Silver, a representative for Classroom, said ClassroomUniforms.com contains vital



Beth Silver

information for parents and schools, as well as retailers. "Especially now that more pre-schools and high schools are adding uniform programs, it is really important for schools to understand what the programs are about so they make informed decisions," she said. "We designed the site because we realized that administrators needed as much information at their fingertips as possible."

In August, the company will release a survey on ClassroomUniforms.com that includes information from members of the National School Board Association on how successful their school uniform programs have been.

For further information, contact Strategic Partners' Classroom division in Chatsworth,