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Mini Me Geology is a division of Giverny, Inc.

**Tracy Barnhart**  
**Professional Geologist, Founder of Giverny/Mini Me Geology**

Tracy Barnhart grew up around science. Both of her parents were involved in various fields, but she didn't know that her genetics would later develop in college, leading her in a new direction.

Born and raised in Princeton, West Virginia, Barnhart was introduced to science at a young age. Her mother was a middle school biology teacher and her father taught chemistry on the college level. They never pushed their children in the direction of science, although Barnhart did participate in a science fair as a child with a project on plate tectonics.

At Furman University, Barnhart pursued studies for a business degree. Since it's a liberal arts school students are required to fulfill a series of science requirements. Barnhart chose a geology class, which led to another one second trimester. Soon she found studying rocks and minerals to be more interesting than microeconomics and made the switch to Geology. She went on to complete a Master's degree in Geology at the University of South Carolina.

Over the last 14 years, Barnhart has worked for several environmental consulting firms as Project Manager/ Hydrogeologist and Team Leader specializing in the assessment and clean-up of contaminated properties. In 2001, she turned her attention to starting a floral design business, Giverny ([www.givernyonline.com](http://www.givernyonline.com)), with real, preserved flowers. Over time it became too difficult to continue the business due to the South Carolina humidity's effect on the flowers, working full time and becoming a mother. Barnhart then changed the concept of GivernyOnline.com to selling items made from rocks and minerals. Something she was an expert on.

A few years later, Barnhart and her husband, who works in radio broadcasting, were invited to visit their son, Noah's, kindergarten class to talk about their careers. She quickly considered that the young children would probably not understand what she did at her environmental firm, so she gathered up a variety of rocks and minerals and some mineral jewelry to teach them about rocks and what a geologist is. The children were thrilled and she allowed them to take the rock samples home.

After the experience, Barnhart began to think about the reaction of the kindergartners and the fact that there isn't much taught about geology in early elementary school – the age of children that are typically really interested in rocks and minerals. In first grade her son completed only a brief study on rocks, but it included very little information. After that he really didn't have any study on the subject at all. It gave Barnhart an idea.

In 2006, Barnhart cut back her hours at the environmental firm and started Mini Me Geology ([www.minimegeology.com](http://www.minimegeology.com)). She realized that her mission as a professional geologist was to show kids and adults the wonders of Earth. Mini Me Geology is a site where children, parents and educators can come to learn not only about great rocks and minerals but receive information about the science of geology. The site offers rocks from around the world and kits not available anywhere else, project ideas for class or home, "Ask a Geologist", an interactive site with games and puzzles to encourage learning, Rockland Gazette newsletter, as well as curriculum ideas for teachers and homeschoolers, and more.

Since starting the business, Barnhart has received considerably positive feedback from parents and educators about Mini Me Geology and the fact that she offers more than just a box of rocks, but a real opportunity for children to experience and learn.

Barnhart lives in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina with her husband and their two children.

