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Wednesday, 12/28/05

Club caters to youths yearning for fun with fitness

Health club caters to youths yearning for fun with fitness Fitwize 4 Kids will give children chance to exercise

in their own gym By COURTNEY WATSON
Staff Writer

BRENTWOOD — Loud music, tons of friends and no parents allowed — what's not to like about a gym just for kids?

The owners of Fitwize 4 Kids — a new health club for kids ages 6 1/2-15 — hope children catch on to the concept when they open their gym in the Moores Crossing shopping center in January.

"We want them to think of it as their gym," said Amy Fessler, who will co-own the center with Natalie Cooley. "That way, they'll grow up thinking exercise is fun, and not something you dread doing."

The club works much like an adult gym: kids have their own cards to enter the circuit, where they rotate for 45 minutes fitness training equipment designed just for adolescent bodies.

"There's always an instructor in the middle, and they're on each station for one minute," Cooley said. "It keeps their attention, which isn't easy to do."

Fessler said the specially designed equipment is nearly impossible to use incorrectly and makes exercise more like a ride than a workout.

"It's almost like a theme park for fitness," she said.

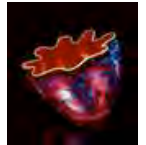
Membership is \$50 a month for a six-month commitment, and kids can come whenever and as often as they want.

Fessler and Cooley said they hope to attract student athletes, kids who might need to lose some weight or develop healthier habits, and children who simply want to get on the right path to lifelong fitness.

"We are a stepping stone from programs like My Gym and The Little Gym," Cooley said.

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"They're geared toward motor skills and social skills, and we expand the knowledge from there."

Keeping it fun will be the fast pace of classes, instructors who motivate and challenge (Fessler is one of three certified trainers Fitwize will start out with) and Fitwize bucks, which will reward kids for meeting their goals with "money" that can be used to buy healthy prizes like basketballs.

"If they're got an eye on that basketball, it'll motivate them to reach their goals," Fessler said.

In the future, the two owners plan to work with schools to plan assemblies on health and fitness and partner with family sports pub Beef O'Brady's on a healthy menu for kids. New offerings like kids' yoga and cheer conditioning also will be added to Fitwize's repertoire.

"It's definitely a passion on ours. For me, it's like paying it forward," said Fessler, who trained as a bodybuilder after her mother took her to the gym as a child. "I'm living proof of what you can do if someone believes in you."

Fitwize 4 Kids will be located at 91 Seaboard Lane, Suite 107 in the Moores Crossing shopping center. More information is available at www.fitwize4kidstn.com. •



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