

JumpBunch gets kids moving

Broomfield couple use franchise

By Nica Rognmoe, For the Camera

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BROOMFIELD - Between computers, video games, iPods and television, the idea of playing sports or going to the recreational center has become a foreign and outdated idea to some kids.

One Broomfield couple aims to change that. Their business, JumpBunch of Suburban Denver, is centered on getting kids off the couch and learning exercise skills early on.

"JumpBunch is focused on helping kids learn sports and fitness in a non-competitive environment," said David Hall, who started the JumpBunch franchise in Colorado with his wife, Alicia.

Annapolis, Md.-based JumpBunch Inc. started in 1997 and launched a franchise program in 2002. It is focused on children in pre-school and grade school and is "dedicated to nurturing an active lifestyle through the fun of sports," Heidi Bultman, a representative for JumpBunch, said in a prepared statement.

JumpBunch owners bring their program to locations such as schools and recreational centers for activities once a week. There are more than 70 activities facilitators can teach, including soccer, volleyball and floor hockey.

The cost depends on the location. Schools sometimes pay for the experience, but at recreational centers, parents pay for the classes. JumpBunch caters to 24 schools and day care locations across the United States and has plans to open 100 new locations by the end of 2010, according to Bultman's statement.

With childhood obesity on the rise, children should exercise regularly and participate in sports in order to decrease their chances of becoming overweight, according to the report "Overweight and Physical Activity Among Children: A Portrait of States and the Nation 2005," by the National Survey of Children's Health at nschdata.org. The survey, led by the National Center for Health Statistics, a part of the Centers for the Disease Control and Prevention, found 16 percent of children and teens ages 6 to

19 are overweight - triple the proportion from 1980, according to cdc.gov.

Not only is being overweight unhealthy, it can lead to serious problems. Overweight children have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight as adults and a greater risk of high cholesterol and high blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The Halls realize the importance of exercise for their son Ryan, 2. They also have experience from coaching kids most of their adult lives.

They joined JumpBunch because they wanted a business that focused on kids and family. They've lived in Broomfield for 11/2 years and wanted to start a business here because it has been a great place to raise their son, David Hall said.

"He's our test subject for the activities. He's more than willing to participate. He helped give us the confidence that other kids would love it," Alicia Hall said.

JumpBunch participants also are more willing to get active in their 30- to 60-minute lessons.

"Aidan gets excited when he knows he will be going to JumpBunch the next day," Dawn Keating said of her 31/2-year-old son, who participates in the class at the Paul Derda Recreation Center in Broomfield.

Keating said the program is affordable. She said she also likes the Halls' commitment.

"They sincerely care whether parents like the program and the kids enjoy the activities," Keating said. "One time we arrived five minutes late and the Halls stayed late to work with Aidan."

The Halls have a few locations across Colorado and are looking forward to expanding across the Denver area, especially in Broomfield.



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