

## April 18, 2002 - Clifton Park Halfmoon

### Local woman plans children's gym by Heather E. Macdonald

**Local woman plans children's gym**

By HEATHER E. MACDONALD

Children as young as three months old are hitting gymnasiums across the United States, and will soon have the opportunity to work out at Clifton Park's new My Gym Children's Fitness Center, slated to open in August.

What does a three-month-old's fitness program look like? According to facility owner Teddie Jacques, there's no need to worry about babies lifting weights; all classes at the gym will be age appropriate and incorporate music, dance, games, special rides and other activities designed to build confidence, self-esteem and other skills that go beyond physical fitness.

Currently employed as a business manager at St. Gregory's School in Loudonville, Jacques said she made the decision to open a My Gym Children's Fitness Center after deciding she wanted to run her own business and researching options on the Internet. She said the company started in the western United States in 1983 and has grown through franchising to include facilities across the country, including one in Rotterdam.

The youngest group will start with crawling, climbing and tumbling; as they grow and progress, the focus will shift to developing social skills, motor coordination and manipulative skills. Independent classes begin when children are 3.5 years old, and the focus shifts again to concentrate more effort on exercise.

The independent classes are just one reason Jacques said she's excited the facility will be located in Village Plaza at the site of the former Boston Market. She said she envisions parents dropping their children off for class, then heading to Starbucks for a cup of coffee or nearby Clifton Park Center to do some shopping.

"I know the area," said Jacques, who is a Clifton Park resident. "I just knew that would be the place to put the gym. Everything is right there."

Jacques said she plans to be a hands-on owner and will leave her position at St. Gregory's in June so she can devote her time to the gym. She'll be hiring a director and a few other positions, depending on enrollment, and plans to have one teacher for every five children in classes of about 15 children.

"The parents love it in California. There are waiting lists," she said. "I think it will be the same here. I've already gotten a ton of calls."

One of her first customers will likely be her 2-year-old grandson. "My daughter is really excited about it," Jacques said. "She can't wait."

The gym will also offer lifetime memberships, birthday parties and free-play time. Parent participation classes will run 45 minutes and cost \$20 for an eight-week session.

Independent classes will run one hour and cost \$20 for an eight-week session.

For information, call 771-1877.

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For an up-close look at the opportunity, Jacques worked at the local gym as well as a California location.

"The equipment they have is state-of-the-art. I love kids and thought this would do great in Clifton Park," she said. "It's more fun than it is work. I just knew this was the thing for me to do."

She said the gym will serve children from three months through age 9.

Programs for "Tiny Tikes" (ages three to 11 months), "Waddlers" (ages 11 to 18 months), "Gymsters" (ages 19 months to 2.5 years) and "Terrific Tots" (ages 2.5 years to 3.5 years) will all include parent participation.

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