

Jump-A-Roo Takes Off with Assistance from LSBDC at Southeastern University

(Hammond, LA) Jump-A-Roo is a child's fantasyland- an imaginary world catering to birthday parties for pint-size princesses, divas, adventurers and kids of all ages. Scott and Wendy Hallmark gave birth to their brainchild, Jump-A-Roo, in April of 2008 and were assisted in the delivery by the Louisiana Small Business Development Center (LSBDC) at Southeastern Louisiana University.

The LSBDC in Hammond partners with Louisiana Economic Development, U.S. Small Business Administration, and Southeastern Louisiana University to provide individual business consulting at no cost to the small business owner. The center also provides low-cost business training. These services are aimed at helping business owners and entrepreneurs start, grow, and expand their companies.

"We came up with the idea to open a party center, because we use to drive at least 40 minutes out of our way to hold our child's birthday parties. Other parents we knew complained about the same thing. So it dawned on us to open Jump-A-Roo in order to meet that demand," said Wendy.

Scott who is a computer technician and Wendy who works as a registered nurse didn't know where to begin, so they turned to LSBDC at Southeastern for help. Consultant Wayne Ricks assisted Scott and Wendy with developing a business plan, financial statements and a loan package and provided marketing research.

"It was a long two-year process of researching the idea and finding the financing to make it happen. A lot of banks turned us down, because they didn't understand the concept. But our consultant Wayne just keep working with us and working with us, until finally State Bank said yes. Without Wayne, we might not of persisted. He basically supported us and encouraged us. When we hit a roadblock, he found us a detour," said Wendy.

Jump-A-Roo is the only party center of its kind in the Northshore. This 9,000 square foot indoor facility located in Hammond features five party rooms decorated with different themes: a princess room, a diva room, a spa retreat, an animal land, and a jump area. The birthday party center is also open weeknights for families and teams to play.

Even before Jump-A-Roo officially opened, its phone lines were ringing off the hook with bookings. It attracted guests from as far as east as McComb, Mississippi to Denham Springs, Mandeville, Walker, and the Greater New Orleans area. Jump-A-Roo's commercial success also translated into economic development for the region. The new start-up created 1 full-time job and 17 part-time jobs for the Northshore region. The couple continues to work with their LSBDC consultant as they look into opening a second location. Ricks assisted the Hallmarks with marketing research to help find the best location for a second facility.

According to an independent ASBDC economic impact study for Louisiana, LSBDC clients experience a 25 percent increase in sales and an 11 percent increase in employment levels as compared to the average Louisiana business.

To contact the LSBDC at Southeastern University, call 985-549-3831 or email lsbdc.sls@lsbdc.org.



Wendy & Scott Hallmark, owners, Jump-A-Roo