



Gina Pitts with students at Dome School.
(Photos by Scott Jorgensen/Illinois Valley News)

Flippin’ out! Gymnastics coach has lessons for all

By SCOTT JORGENSEN
IVN Staff Writer

It’s Tuesday night at Takilma Dome School. The mostly empty building begins filling up at about 6 o’clock, at which point Gina Pitts swings into action.

Pitts, a USA Gymnastics (USAG) professional coach, organizes the half-dozen students who have gathered, and starts them on warm-up exercises.

The students take turns doing mat tumbles, jump rope and trampoline activities as Pitts watches with a smile. After spending most of her life learning the delicate art of gymnastics, Pitts has the chance to work with the next generation of aspiring gymnasts. And all indications are that she loves it.

Pitts’ passion for gymnastics began at the age of 10, when she started taking lessons. Those lessons led her to local and regional competitions for five years, and kept her plenty busy.

“It’s something I did every day for four hours a day,” Pitts said. “When I wasn’t in school, that’s where I was.”

In 1999, Pitts became a USAG coach, and has assembled an impressive list of credentials since. She has coached for school districts, a city parks-and-recreation program, private gyms, and has even run a developmental program.

Pitts moved to Illinois Valley last year from Southern California and started Gymnastics Revolution in October. It offers classes for children of all ages. The KinderGym program is for children ages 2 to 5, and focuses on such areas as hand-eye coordination and balance.

“For the little ones, it’s barely about gymnastics,” Pitts said. “The whole purpose of it is to build their self esteem.”

GymElements classes are for children 6 and older, and emphasize flexibility and strength, while the GymStars class, ages 5 and older, is for more serious students with previous experience.

A GymTumble class is devoted to teen-agers and adults, and teaches tumbling skills, spatial awareness and physical health, and a GymPrivate class is available for students of all ages.



“I try to adapt to whatever class I have,” Pitts said.

Private and individual lessons are also possible, and allow students the opportunity to receive more special attention.

“I’m going to deal with every kid differently,” Pitts said.

Classes were initially offered only at the RCC Illinois Valley Learning Center in Kerby, but recently have been added to Takilma Community Center.

Pitts also has been in the process of acquiring more equipment for the program. The first new mat arrived early last month, with another expected soon. Two balance beams have been ordered, and Pitts hopes to have a low bar soon.

There are currently 24 students enrolled in the classes. Pitts said she would like to continue expanding the program and making it available to as many children as possible.

In an effort to increase participation, Gymnastics Revolution offers discounts for families with multiple children. Pitts eventually would like to attract sponsorships so that children from low-income families can enjoy the program.

“It’s not so much gymnastics as it is giving the kids something to do here,” Pitts said. “The idea is to get people involved.”

Lessons are \$35 for four sessions. For more information, contact Gina Pitts at 592-5095 or via e-mail at Gymnastics.Revolution@gmail.com.



Photo by ‘Illinois Valley News’

‘WITH GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE’ is the title of a special benefit show Thursday, Dec. 21 to raise funds for a community theater in what was slated to become a topless bar in the former Ivy Theater behind Bi-Rite Auto Parts. Rehearsals are under way, and approximately a quarter of the performers stopped long enough for a photo last week.

The show, sponsored by ‘Rejoice! Performing Arts,’ will include dancing, vocal and instrumental musicians. There also will be a special vocal performer, a silent auction, and potluck appetizers and desserts. Admission will be free, but donations will be accepted. For more information about the family friendly show contact Kina Perez at 659-3467.

Oregon workforce training focuses on improved future

A strategic plan to transform Oregon’s workforce education and training system to ensure that Oregonians have access to the training they need -- and that Oregonians have the highly skilled workforce they need to compete in a global economy, has been released.

Gov. Kulongoski was joined by the Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB) in Salem during the past week for the release of his plan.

The plan, “Winning in the Global Marketplace,” was developed by OWIB at the governor’s direction in partnership with leaders in the business, labor, education communities, and local workforce board partners. The plan makes recommendations for targeted investments in innovation, skills training and workforce education, particularly to help meet the high demands

in manufacturing and health care industries.

“I want every Oregonian to have a good family wage job -- and every business to have a healthy bottom line that enables them to grow, pay good wages, and keep ahead of global competition,” Kulongoski said following a meeting with OWIB.

“But we won’t achieve those goals with old education tools and old ways of thinking, which is why we must embrace a new approach to global competition, education, and workforce training, and why we must make the investments this plan outlines.”

The strategy outlines the state’s plan to address the urgent need for more skilled workers to drive Oregon’s economic growth. It’s anticipated that Oregon will experience 15 percent growth in employment between 2004 and 2014.

Yet for every job created, two openings are expected due to replacement needs. That means Oregon will need 700,000 skilled workers to fill openings created by economic growth and retirements by 2014.

Brains need holiday work

There are ways to keep kids’ minds from taking a vacation during long school breaks, such as the Christmas/New Year holiday.

The key, say educators, is to find fun ways to keep children engaged, thinking and learning throughout the year.

The good news is that doing so may be easier than it sounds. For instance, parents can use Choose Your Own Adventure interactive DVDs-based on the best-selling Choose Your Own Adventure book series -- to help keep kids’ minds active. Viewers use the DVD remote control to guide the characters on their mission.

For more information, visit leanforwardmedia.com. (NAPSA)

To the Root

Building the Immune System

The inflammatory response is the body’s first line of defense. Fever, muscle pain, sneezing or coughing are common symptoms. Antiinflammatories do not solve the problem and steroids actually shut off the immune response. People with compromised immunity are more vulnerable to pathogens (virus, bacteria, etc) blood or “autoimmune” diseases and cancers.

Chinese herbs, when specifically prescribed can treat illness and bolster immunity simultaneously.

Maintaining a balance between activity, work and rest is important. Often cases of “chronic fatigue” occur from this imbalance. Adrenal stimulants are NOT recommended as they tend to throw the body into overdrive. Lifestyle changes are essential to immune recovery.



Illinois River Acupuncture
592-5041 Mon., Wed., Fri.
Jo Anne Stone, M.S., L.Ac.





A Time To Give Thanks!

It's the time of year when people slow down and get together and value what's important in their lives. The Holiday season is magical and has a way of making lasting memories for friends and family. Home Valley Bank has looked back to what our customers have brought to us over the years and would like to truly express our gratitude. The relationships we build with our customers, business partners, and with our friends is another way we give back to our community, and its our best way of saying thank you.

Celebrate the season!

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