

NorthSide Business

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One-stop spot for kids, parents

By LINDA JERKINS
For the Journal-Constitution

After hearing about Suzuki Village from friends, Natalie Ross decided to check it out. Now she and her daughters are familiar faces at the new child-enrichment center in Dunwoody.

Suzuki Village opened last August in the Wal-Mart/Borders shopping center. It is an 8,000-square-foot-space where parents (caregivers, too) and kids can learn, play, socialize and relax — all under one roof.

Ross, 41, said she likes that there are different activities and play spaces — in one place — for her girls, ages 2½ and almost 5. She also enjoys the adults-only classes, such as Rise and Shine Yoga and Pilates on Sundays.

"But whether you have one child or four of different ages," Ross said, "it's a great place to meet and talk to other moms."

About the owners

Co-founders are Jennifer Leff and Rachel Dinerman, themselves both moms who wanted a one-stop spot for young families.

In addition to wanting it clean and safe, Leff and Dinerman envisioned a comfortable and contemporary look for their kid-friendly facility, which draws families from Roswell, Alpharetta, east Cobb and Decatur.

Instead of bright primary colors, they chose softer colors of brown, Tiffany blue and sea foam green, which flow throughout the center on its walls and floor tiles. The saltwater fish tank and dragonfly lights in the lobby



RENEE VAN DE GRIFT / Special

A kid-size firetruck is the place to get a haircut at Suzuki Village. It's 4-year-old Zoe Keysor's turn.

area are fun accents and crowd pleasers. So are the colorful bathrooms — with adult and kid-size toilets, urinals and sinks.

They also wanted to utilize the Suzuki Method of education, where praise, reinforcement and respect for each child are important.

Here is a look at some of the classes, activities and services at Suzuki Village:

Classes

► For kids: Morning classes

target children under 4. Popular classes include music, dance and gym (with a miniature rock-climbing wall). Prices range from \$204-\$228 for a 12-week session. After-school classes, such as cheerleading, soccer and Spanish, are for children through age 9. Prices range from \$150 to \$228 for a 12-week session.

Most classes meet for 45 minutes once a week for 12 weeks during the winter, spring, summer and fall. After-school classes,

designed for kids k-3, meet for one hour, once a week for 12 weeks. The spring session begins March 3.

Play areas

When it is too cold or wet to go to the park, head inside to the parent-supervised play area, which includes a

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS

SUZUKI VILLAGE

► Location: 4745 Ashford Dunwoody Road, Atlanta (about 1.5 miles north of Perimeter Mall).

► Contact info: 770-901-5437; www.suzukivillage.com

► Hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Sundays. (Closed Saturdays and every day between 1-2 p.m. for lunch and cleaning.)

ball bin, play kitchen, small slides and toys. Fees are \$6 in the morning and \$4 in the afternoon. For \$9 per hour, staffers will watch your child in the play area while you take an adult exercise or parent class.

For parents

► Classes: Prenatal and parenting, plus exercise classes, like Body Sculpting Your Way Back into Your Jeans (\$150 for 12 weeks).

► Seminars: Among the varied offerings are potty training and CPR for infants.

► For nursing moms: When you need a quiet spot to nurse your baby while your older child is in class, take a comfy seat in the nursing room, which also includes changing tables.

Other services

► Birthday parties: Select from among 20 party themes (such as pirates, dinosaurs or princess) or your own. A 90-minute party for 20 children is \$440. It includes two party coordinators, themed activities and games, paper

goods, food (pizza is a favorite) and a beverage. Bring your own birthday cake or Suzuki Village will order one for an additional charge.

► Haircuts for kids: Hop into kid-size firetruck for a haircut (\$15) on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

► Manicures for moms: Manicures (\$12) and pedicures (\$15) on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

► Boutique: Need a child's birthday present or a gift for a new mom? The small shop offers wooden puzzles, music, DVDs and children's apparel. For mothers, there are baby carriers and one-of-a-kind jewelry.

► Special events: Check the Web site calendar for concerts, seasonal events, "lunch and learns" and guest lectures.

On Feb. 14, Suzuki Village will host a drop-off Valentine Party from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The fee is \$30 per child. From 2 to 5 p.m. Feb. 23, join Hal Runkel, author of "Scream-Free Parenting," for a seminar. The fee is \$50 per person or \$75 per couple.

