

School for mind, body emphasizes nutrition, exercise

By JERRY WOLFF
Of The Oakland Press

Nanci Canine was on an airplane with her husband and one of her daughters when she was inspired to create a business.

"I grabbed a napkin and wrote down a basic business plan," she said of the event which led to the 2005 creation of a School for the Mind and Body in Clarkston.

CLARKSTON

"I just saw that there seemed to be a lack of respect, loyalty, accountability and responsibility in children," she said.

"And there were too many 'drugs.' Children get drugged to church, drugged to grandma's and drugged to school."

These are things, she said, that children should want to do

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Call 248-814-7100 or visit the Web site: www.school-forthemindandbody.com to learn more about the school.

naturally.

The school, which sends its graduates to first grade, has students from ages 2 to 5.

"We emphasize life skills and the senses of awareness such as touch, taste, smell, eating and hearing," Canine said of the students who attend the Mind and Body school from 180 families in the Oakland area.

The school also teaches the concepts of thinking, learning, nutrition and exercise, she said.

The hours a student goes to classes varies depending upon age.

A 3-year-old, for example,

attends the "academic based pre-school learning program" on Tuesdays and Thursdays while a 4-year-old has classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

A "young" 5-year-old goes Monday through Friday and kindergarten is five days a week from 9 a.m. to noon, Canine said.

Some children with disabilities also attend, she said, and occupational and speech therapists are available to help those students.

Cost varies from \$150 to \$900 a month depending on the number of hours per week the students attend the school, she said. Canine became even more concerned about exercise and nutrition while sitting on a bench at Walt Disney World in Orlando.

"Oh my word, I didn't see a thin family there," she said.

She has hired a personal fitness expert, Jacklyn Rzepecki, to instruct students in both nutrition and exercise.

"A day is coming when instead of getting academic tutors, we're going to get personal trainers to try and fight this battle against childhood obesity," Canine predicted.

A study by the New England Journal of Medicine found "the number of overweight children aged 6 to 19 has tripled since 1970."

Children need to be taught that food is fuel and we need to put good food in our bodies to make them run as best as possible, she said.

"I had one student, Theresa, who was going to be rewarded with an ice cream for helping her father clean the garage."

"She said 'No, I want to eat healthy today,'" Canine said the child said.



The Oakland Press/VAUGHN GUKSANYAN

Students at the School for the Mind and Body in Clarkston gather for a group photo. The school, which caters to children ages 2-5, teaches the concepts of thinking, learning, nutrition and exercise, according to founder Nanci Canine.