



House of Ninjas, LLC, Marks Grand Opening on Nov. 16

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O'FALLON – House of Ninjas, LLC, a family-owned ninja warrior obstacle course training facility for youth and adults, will celebrate its grand opening on Saturday, Nov. 16, at 1334 Central Park Drive in O'Fallon.

Owner John Wilmas and his wife, Nicky, have worked with the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the Metro East at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and Director Jo Ann DiMaggio May to achieve their dream of opening a ninja warrior gym.

Their interest in American Ninja Warrior began six years ago when Wilmas first saw the NBC-TV show and told his wife he wanted to apply to be on it. From there, Wilmas competed in seasons 9, 10 and 11, further fueling his ninja warrior passion.

After discovering there was no ninja warrior gym in the area, Wilmas' passion grew into building the gym of his dreams, with the goal of helping people of all ages become stronger, healthier and more confident. The gym consists of a ninja obstacle training course for children and adults. Additionally, the gym will host birthday parties, camps and special events.

"We noticed that this area is full of kids who are the perfect age for this," Wilmas stated. "Now that the American Ninja Warrior Junior show has started, we would love to help these kids get on the show."

By utilizing his cinematography degree and experience on the show, Wilmas is looking forward to assisting both children and adults in the creation of their own submission videos.

House of Ninjas also plans to focus inclusivity for all. Inspired by past competitors on the show with special needs or disabilities, the Wilmas are extremely excited for plans to host special-needs nights at the gym, showing that there can be ninjas of all kinds.

"Our goal is to help people live healthier lives and leave the gym knowing they can take on the world," Wilmas shared. "We want to help kids who are unaware of their potential and let them know what they are capable of. You may not be the strongest or the fastest, but you may be the best ninja warrior, if provided with the outlet."

Since May 2019, SBDC Director Jo Ann DiMaggio May has assisted Wilmas by providing advising and assistance with business plan development, obtaining permits, the timeline process and making necessary connections.

"Jo Ann gave us the structure we needed," Wilmas said. "We had an idea, and she was able to help us get the ball rolling and turn that idea into a reality."

“John and his family have worked hard physically and mentally to prepare for business ownership,” DiMaggio May said. “The Wilmas’ will keep learning, and I am excited to see them open House of Ninjas. I look forward to seeing their future success and assisting them along the way.”

In the future, Wilmas hopes to expand his passion to open multiple ninja warrior obstacle gyms in the area.

For more information, visit houseofninjas.com, Facebook at @houseofninjas, Instagram at @house_of_ninjas or email contact@houseofninjas.com.

The Illinois SBDC for the Metro East assists start-up ventures like House of Ninjas LLC, as well as existing businesses headquartered in the nine-county region of Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Clinton, St. Clair, Washington, Monroe and Randolph. It is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and SIUE as a service to Illinois small businesses.

By aiding entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the Metro East by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs, and encouraging new investment. It enhances the region’s economic interests by providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of counseling, training, research, and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses. When appropriate, the SBDC strives to affiliate its ties to the region to support the goals and objectives of both the SIUE School of Business and the University at large.

To learn about the SBDC, contact the IL SBDC for the Metro East at SIUE at 618-650-2929.

Photo (L-R): Nicky and John Wilmas, owners of House of Ninjas, LLC.