

# WORLD OF KIDS

The seed that started World of Gymnastics began in 1989 with Laura Mikszan teaching gymnastics in her basement. Laura had been a collegiate gymnast at the University of South Carolina and had gained teaching experience at a local gym in Charleston to earn money for college. Her love of the sport grew into a larger vision, and in 1993, after studying the area demographics, she opened World of Gymnastics, “where every child makes a world of difference” in Woodstock, Georgia. Laura quickly outgrew her first facility, exceeding her goal of 200 students in half the expected time. She then built her first building (12,000 square feet) in 1994. By 1998, Laura was ready to enlarge her club and an auxiliary gym was added making World of Gymnastics a total of 21,000 square feet.

Over the next few years, the market experienced an increase in demand for cheer instruction. To meet this need, World of Cheer (5,000 square foot facility) was opened adjacent to World of Gymnastics in 2003.

Currently, the newest endeavor is World of Swim, a state of the art learn to swim aquatics facility. The pool, which opened for its first classes in May, is a state of the art facility that uses computers to monitor and maintain water quality. World of Swim offers swimming lessons for kids and adults, water aerobics, family swim time and birthday parties.

All of these “Worlds” have been tied together with a new corporate name: “World of Kids” Athletic Campus. The new corporate theme is “Our Focus is Family, Fun and Fitness”. All three facilities are next to one another on what is now a 6 acre campus. Room for growth is still available that will afford opportunities for future expansion.

Laura relies on a large staff of well trained instructors and office personnel to maintain company goals and the mission statement: World of Gymnastics believes in promoting self-esteem and creating self-confidence in children through the discipline of gymnastics. World of Gymnastics offers skilled and fun instruction to all children. We encourage each child to achieve his or her best potential and keep safety as our highest priority. We also accommodate families by offering a wide variety of classes on a convenient schedule.

One reason for the business’s success is the continual reinvestment in the program, and it shows. World of Gymnastics has been voted “Best of the Best” seven years in a row by local residents in the Towne Laker and Sixes Living Magazine. Investments are not only made in the buildings and equipment, but also in the people hired. Staff members are sent to National and Regional Congress as well as Boot Camps, Kinder Accreditation for Preschool Teachers (KAT) workshops, Movement Education and Lesson Plan Development workshops and Dale Carnegie courses. World of Gymnastics has also enhanced its program by hosting Olympic Gymnasts to speak to students and give clinics.

Some of the club’s historical highlights include the purchase of the 1996 Olympic Vault (signed by Keri Strugg) and Bars, and visits from Olympians Keri Strugg, Amanda Borden, John Macready, John Roethlisberger, Shannon Miller and Kim Zmeskal. World of Gymnastics was also featured twice on NBC and interviewed as experts on the sport during the 2000 Olympics.

Laura believes strongly in education and training. She has been a clinician several times at National and Regional Congresses. World of Gymnastics has also hosted eight KAT workshops as well as several Movement Education and Lesson Plan Development Workshops.

It is important to Laura to give back to the community. Her favorite charity is March of Dimes and she has helped raise thousands of dollars for this worthy cause. Laura's community involvement also includes: Past President of the Woodstock Business Association, member of the Town Lake Optimist Club, Member of the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce, Board member of Businesses Education Students and Teachers, Partner in Education with Cherokee County School Board and Participant in Principle for a Day Program 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. Recently, Laura was honored in YWCA's 2003 Tribute to Women of Achievement, which recognizes women who have demonstrated leadership and excellence in their professional and community endeavors.

The "World of Kids" enrollment is now over 1500 students including gymnastics, cheer and swim. Gymnastics programs available include: Parent/Tot Classes, Gymaroo (preschool) classes, school age gymnastics for boys and girls, advanced classes and competitive Levels 4 through 10 for girls and class instructional to competitive class 4 – 6 for boys. Cheer programs include: Cheer Tech Classes, Tumbling for Cheerleading, Advanced Tumbling and Competitive Cheer Teams. The Swim programs have: Parent/Tot Classes, Preschool age classes and school age classes for the beginner up to the competitive level swimmer.

The World of Gymnastics, and now World of Kids, has and will continue to maintain the philosophy that every child is important and special, whether they need to be challenged as a beginner or at a competitive level. From inception, classes have been offered for children of all ages and abilities. In 1994, classes were added for children with special needs and in 1999, Laura earned the Autism Society Professional of the Year. The programs offered at World of Kids contribute to the child's positive self image in a structured but enjoyable environment. At World of Kids it is important that every child leave with a smile on his or her face.