



## Entrepreneur finds RCCC's Small Business Center is the right fit

Publication Salisbury Post

Date September 16, 2007

Section(s) Business

Most people go to a gym to get in shape, lose weight, build muscle or maintain their level of fitness. Local business owner Kathy Primavera went beyond exercise and found more satisfaction and fulfillment at the gym.

Primavera is owner/operator of Contours Express - The Better Idea in Women's Gyms at 331 Faith Road in Salisbury. Primavera had worked several years as a local real estate agent when she decided she wanted something more and began looking at a second career.

"I originally had planned to go to school for aesthetics and open a day spa," Primavera said. "But after I completed a few one-on-one counseling sessions at the Rowan-Cabarrus Community College Small Business Center, I began to realize that wasn't the direction for me. I had a real desire to help women in the community -- to do something really worthwhile for them."

As a result, Primavera discussed several business options with Heidi Whitesell, director of the Small Business Center at the college, and was referred to Al Nichols of Entrepreneur Source.

"Al introduced me to several different franchise opportunities and helped me sift through them until I found just the one that would fulfill my desire to help local women," Primavera said.

With Whitesell and Nichols' help, Primavera determined Contours Express offered everything she was looking for in a new venture. The fitness chain focuses on women with limited time for exercise.

"The fitness program developed by Contours Express is great for women - especially busy women," Primavera said. "This particular franchise has developed a perfect 29-minute workout, so it can easily fit into a busy, hectic schedule."

Primavera also likes that the Contours Express program is not limited to circuit-training, which can cause repetitive overuse injuries. Contours Express offers a customized program to ensure it's right for the individual and her fitness needs.

The choice of Contours Express has more than fulfilled Primavera's desire to benefit women.

"It's so exciting to see new members join and over time achieve awesome results for themselves," she said. "I'm enjoying my new role as a business owner, being able to really make a difference. My team of employees also finds satisfaction in helping others achieve their weight loss and fitness goals."

Word of mouth referrals have contributed greatly since the launch of Primavera's business earlier this year. A steady stream of new clients has Primavera considering the possibility of opening another location to make the 29-minute program available to more local women.

Primavera credits the Small Business Center with helping her take the first steps to becoming a business owner.

"Anyone considering starting a business in this area should consult the Small Business Center at RCCC. They can help you figure out not only what you want to do, but also how to make your endeavor a success," Primavera said.

"The experienced business veterans at the center instruct people on the art of making sound business decisions, fostering confidence in these decisions and help them take the right steps to put the wheels into motion," she added.

The assistance Primavera received gave her more than business savvy. It helped her to grow on a personal level as well.

"I found a strong backbone and a solid sense of self-confidence building within me the more I interacted with the counselors and instructors at the SBC," she said. "I realized the importance of feeling good about what you do in life. It takes courage and self-confidence to follow your dreams. The SBC helped me go for it."

Primavera also appreciated the tools, insight and guidance on how to set up the many aspects of a business franchise. She received helpful encouragement and positive input on making business decisions.

According to Primavera, she was given guidance that made her more confident as a leader, preparing her to deal with the employer-employee relationships she would have to manage as the owner of a business.

"I can honestly say Heidi at the Small Business Center paved the road for me to start the right way with such a positive upbeat attitude and giving me the resources I needed," Primavera said. "I can see Contours Express of Salisbury gaining momentum with every step. It's so exciting and fulfilling. I can only guess how far we'll go from here."

The Small Business Center at RCCC is a community-based provider of education, training, counseling, information and referral, assisting entrepreneurs with business ideas and existing small business ventures.

For more information about the SBC and its programs, contact Heidi Whitesell, SBC director, at whitesellh@rowancabarrus.edu or 704-216-3526.