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Dive in to Floaties, Poway's new swim school

By Kathy Fairbanks

May 1, 2008

After six months of construction and years of dreaming and planning, Karyn and Mike Morrill are ready to welcome swimmers of all ages to their new, indoor pool facility on Poway Road.

Floaties Swim School, which until November 2007 the Morrills operated out of their Poway back yard pool, now has a new home — all 6,000 square feet — across from the Poway Library.

While Karyn Morrill handles the "front of the house," her husband is known to hundreds of local kids as "Mr. Mike," the swim coach that eases their fear of the water and gives them the tools to swim with confidence.

"You have to know who to push and who not to push," Mike Morrill said of his teaching technique. "It's a fine line."

Both Morrills believe that the goal of their business is to keep kids safe in and around the water.

"Our theory is safety, fun and learning," said Mike Morrill, who has been teaching swimming for 15 years and is a former college All-American water polo player and a 1992 Poway High grad.

To lend a hand with the instruction, the Morrills have nine teachers on staff and keep their class sizes at a 3-to-1 ratio. At any given time, there will only be three to five classes practicing in the 60-by-25-foot indoor pool.

While returning students may be initially disappointed that "Mr. Mike" is now only coaching the very youngest clientele and those with special needs, the Morrills are confident that their other instructors are well-versed in "Mr. Mike's" methods.

The group has even been training and working together for the past three months on those techniques.

The Morrills also said that their instructors are mature, have backgrounds in education and are "lifers," meaning swim instruction is their passion.

In addition, swimmers will enjoy the pool's 90-92 degree temperature, along with the salt purification system, which eliminates the need for harsh chemicals.

Parents will be able to watch their children from a viewing area that runs the length of the pool and is separated by a wall with windows. There is also an outdoor patio, which features benches and tables, where parents can relax and watch their kid's lesson.

The pool itself features a shelf, where kids can sit in the water and play, while waiting for their turn with the instructor.

Inside, there is a playroom for siblings not participating in the classes, boys and girls locker rooms, restrooms and a store.

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The Morrills said that they "specialize in special cases" and have had success with all types of kids, even those who were so afraid of water that they wouldn't take a shower.

The couple also has worked with children with special needs. They said they have had a lot of success with children with Down syndrome and those with autism. They have also worked with children with spina bifida and cerebral palsy.

In addition to swim lessons, the couple is planning on offering birthday parties at the facility. A swim team, which will probably start mid-summer, is also in the planning stages.

Swim lessons are available to all ages, starting at 3 months old. Prices are \$150 for eight lessons or \$200 for 12 lessons. Classes are 30 minutes long and run twice a week. There is a \$25 registration fee. For more information, call 877-277-7946 or visit <http://www.floatiesswimschool.com>.

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