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TRAMPOLINE PARKS

Action City Family Fun Center: Jumping on a Growing Trend

By June Allan Corrigan

It's a really hopping scene at Action City Family Fun Center in Eau Claire, Wis., – in more ways than one. The popular fun zone and key component of the Metropolis Resort and Conference Center has always been a magnet for families and kids wanting to play arcade games, ride go-karts or bumper cars, scale the climbing wall, play mini golf or mini bowling and ever so much more. The variety of things to do simply boggles the mind! However, never one to rest on its laurels, in recent years Action City had been keeping its eye on a growing trend in family amusement centers. At the close of 2016 after much research, it finally jumped on the bandwagon. In December, the facility added a Trampoline Park and the upsurge in business has exceeded all expectations.

“We were blowing down the doors when it first opened and although it's leveled off some, I wouldn't say it's died down by any means. Things are more manageable now but I only think the Trampoline Park's popularity is going to continue to grow,” said Action City Manager **Billy Bandli**. He's a man of many hats, he likes to say, charged with overseeing all the attractions at Action City save for the indoor Water Park. Yes, there is one of those too! Meanwhile, there are two Resort Managers who co-manage the Center – **Sara Abbott** who specializes in sales and marketing and **Benny Anderson** who is the equivalent of operations director.

Anderson has a theory as to why the Trampoline Park has been such a hit. “It's just so much more encompassing for all ages than our traditional fun center stuff,” he said. Middle schoolers have always been a crowd staple but the 30,000-square-foot Trampoline Park addition featuring 20,000-square-feet of trampolines appeals to a much wider demographic. “We have toddler time out here, we have aerobics for adults, but the biggest draw is that it gets everyone active. You're



Employees Cassie Schilling, left, and Amanda Brown at the dodgeball area. The center's trampoline park was added late last year.

up and moving, having fun. You're basically exercising without even realizing it.” It's a boon to parents to see their children being physically active, not to mention the benefits they themselves derive. It's really a family affair!

The Trampoline Park isn't simply a vast sea of flat surfaces to jump on. Sure, there's a general jumping area but more significantly there are a couple of dodgeball courts, stunt airbag pits, a jousting beam, fidget ladder and slackline, four basketball hoops, an indoor playground and four especially popular Ninja Warrior courses. All these challenging attractions feature trampolines and/or air bags and soft play materials at

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651-917-6415
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Photographed making a pizza were employees Liz Fleming, left, with Savannah Ashlin. Also pictured carrying pizzas is staff member Maraina Johnson. The entertainment never stops at Action City Trampoline Park and Family Fun Center.



Action City Family Fun Center (From page 76)

their core. At any given time, 400 to 500 people can be engaged, whether that's parents climbing through obstacles with their toddlers in the interactive indoor playground, would-be basketball stars shooting hoops, daredevils perfecting intricate jumps in the stunt air-bag pits, or countless competitors determined to make it through the Ninja Warrior courses. "We've been running fitness classes in the morning that routinely sell out. We had a lot of people training for marathons in the winter come in because it was different than running on a treadmill and it was still a great cardio workout. The Trampoline Park has really lent itself to opening up our market even more," Bandli said.

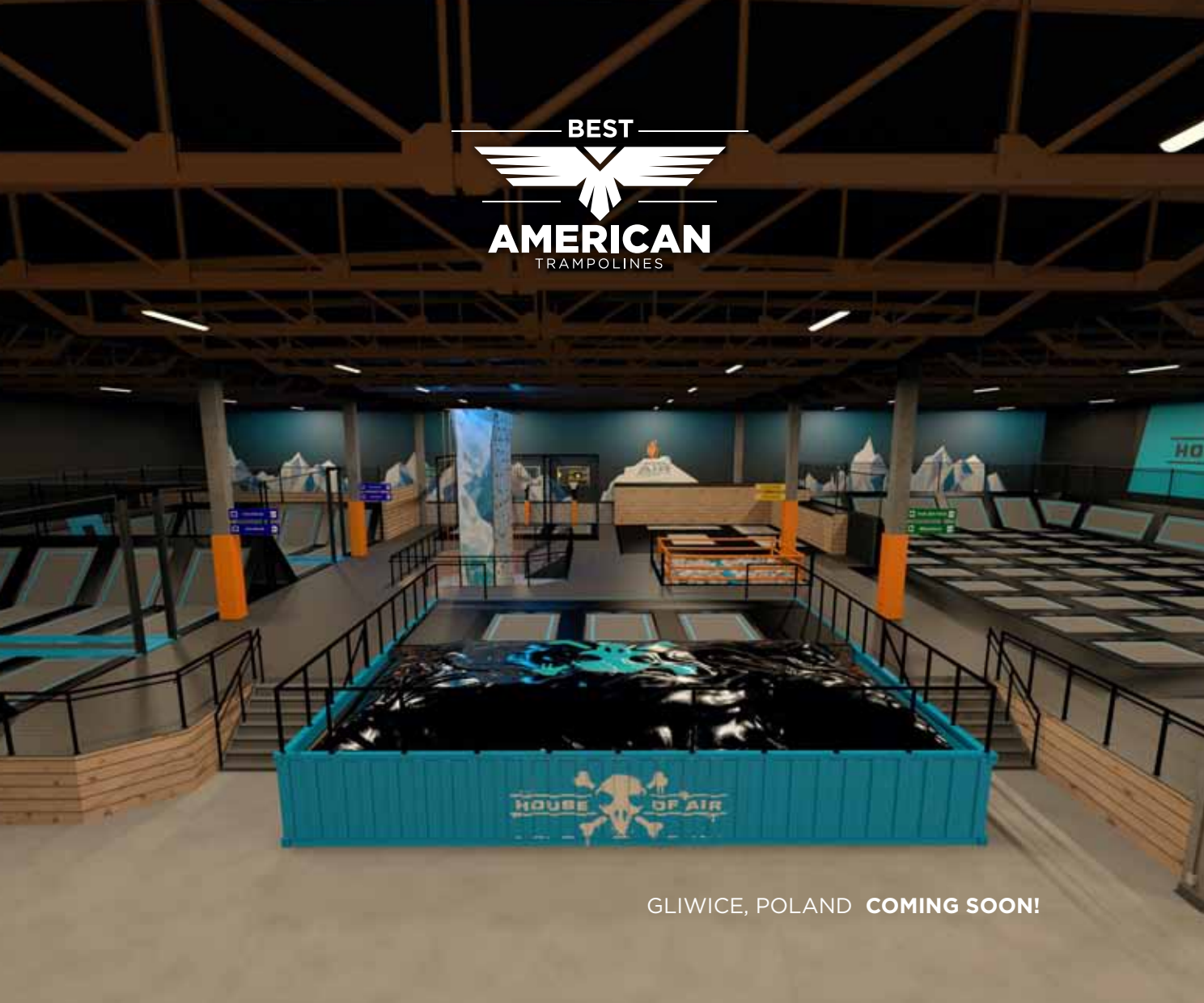
Safety always comes first and foremost. Management borrowed principles from Red Cross lifeguard training that their Chaos Indoor Water Park employees must of course take, and applied them to the science of trampolines. "The Red Cross teaches you how to monitor the water, how to patrol and scan for injuries. They teach you how to talk to guests and communicate with other staff members to ensure a safe environment. We train our Trampoline Park employees similarly," said Anderson. Trampoline Center participants must sign a waiver form which can be done ahead of time courtesy of their website. Those who opt to fill out the forms at the on-site waiver station also have an opportunity to view entertaining videos showing them what they're not supposed to do. It has been the observation of Action City Trampoline Park and Family Fun Center staff that injecting a little levity into rule enforcement helps ease the task. "All of

our rule signs incorporate a joke so that people want to read them," said Anderson. "For example, a sign at the Water Park reads: 'Only 12 people allowed in the hot tub at one time. When the 13th person enters, we release the sharks.' "

It's important to remind guests to stay in their comfort zone at the Trampoline Park, according to Anderson, not only for safety's sake but as a way to maximize their fun. People are amazed how tired they can become even after a half hour of jumping. But that is the beauty of being part of a larger entertainment complex. Action Center offers package deals that give guests an opportunity to take a break and go off and sample many of their other fun and thrilling activities. Guests can pace themselves, if you will, and come back to the Trampoline Park after practicing some swings in the batting cages, playing laser tag, navigating the laser maze, racing around the indoor go-kart track or whatever their heart desires. Before the advent of the Trampoline Park, the go-karts were the Center's number one attraction but who knows? The introduction of an outdoor go-kart track this summer may cause them to regain their status. Another addition this summer is an outdoor Soaring Eagle Zipline Ride that will take guests to a 130-foot altitude in reverse where they can take in a bird's eye view of the entire resort before zipping them safely back down.

The theme of many Action City's attractions skews towards disaster. There's a volcano that lurks behind the climbing wall, for instance. Their laser tag course

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Employee Hunter Sandvig at an Action City go-kart track. Before the installation of the trampoline park, the go-karts were the center's number one attraction, and a new outdoor go-kart track is opening this summer.

Action City Family Fun Center (From page 78)

looks like an alien invasion. The water park has 25-foot wall murals depicting dinosaurs attacking. Not surprisingly, they stuck with the disaster theme when designing the Trampoline Park, ultimately choosing a purple and green color combination and running with it. Anderson considers the Ninja Warrior Course to be the pièce de résistance. “I always encourage guests to stay with it. When guests come to the trampolines in Ninja Warrior, it's not something they've seen before and they're so excited to learn better ways to do it and figure it out. Sometimes they get discouraged. I just say keep at it. And keep active. That's the best thing.”

The entertainment never stops at Action City Trampoline Park and Family Fun Center which management has discovered is the key to customer satisfaction. Action City is the most prominent feature of the Metropolis Resort and Conference Center campus. The facility started its life as a family entertainment center and the 107-room hotel was built later. Then came the water park and of course, its most recent addition is the well-received Trampoline Park where they had the foresight to include 10 more birthday party rooms, tripling the number they had before. The party rooms have been sold out practically every weekend since opening. Situated halfway between the Wisconsin Dells and the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the 365-days-a-year Metropolis Resort draws repeat day traffic as well as overnight visitors. It's a happening place that continues to grow. ♻️



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