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NiNi Bambini center holds grand opening

BEDFORD NEWS

OCT 5, 2012

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What started as a yard sale has become a local Bedford festival, and this year, NiNi Palooza! also served as a housewarming, of sorts.

NiNi Bambini, a maternal wellness center at 166 S. River Road, celebrated its recent move with a grand opening celebration, NiNi Palooza!, on Sept. 29.

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NiNi Palooza! featured pony rides, a petting zoo, train rides, children’s concerts with Steve Blunt and Sammie Haynes, and a reading by children’s author Eric Pinder.

The beaming smile on one little girl's face, who rode a pony around the parking lot, represented the carnival-like atmosphere created by owner Nina Cullen and her business partner, Julie Mudd.

Forty-eight vendors participated in the fourth annual NiNi Palooza!, and hundreds of people showed up.

“NiNi Palooza! started out as a yard sale and evolved into a family meeting day, where families meet each other for the first time, their kids as their bond,” Cullen said.

This move has more than doubled NiNi Bambini’s amount of retail and classroom space to a total of 4,000 square feet.

In the new space, NiNi Bambini is offering more group and class options, including toddler art classes where moms paint too, as well as mom and baby yoga and fitness. Cullen and Mudd also have plans to add a Zumba certified class for postpartum moms. New online offerings are still in the works.

Four years ago, Maureen Reno started at NiNi Bambini with a Preparing for Birth class.

“Even at CMC, where they have nurses helping you, you have to leave eventually,” she said. “When I found NiNi, it was a godsend. This is a great space.”

NiNi Bambini teaches parenting in a healthy way, Cullen said. “There are so many parenting styles, there’s no right way. We respect every one.

“These classes are neutral – I don’t know your background or your financial situation,” Cullen said. “We have a lot of ER doctors, salespeople, nurses, PTs and chiros who take these classes.”

“Here, you’re just a mom,” Mudd added.

“We’ve tried everything that we sell, so we know it works. We charge a nominal fee for our classes,” Cullen said. NiNi Bambini serves mothers from pregnancy to parenting children 3 and younger.

“When they put you in the car with your brand-new baby and you look at each other and you wonder, ‘What the hell are you going to do now?’ you come here,” said Bob Evans, stay-at-home dad of an 18-month-old.

“My employees are all people who have been here for classes, who come back week after week,” Cullen said. “We make a difference, and they come back here because they feel passionate about it.”

NiNi Bambini has 1,753 members in its open group on Facebook, which allows families and moms to come together from all over the U.S. “Once, it was a village that raised kids, so we’re just reinstituting that,” Mudd said.

“People are always saying, ‘Will you open up a store near me?’” Cullen said. She would like to expand within a few years and is considering locations on the New Hampshire Seacoast and in Pennsylvania and Connecticut.

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