COMPUTER MOMS

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COMPUTER MOMS OPENS FIRST ILLINOIS FRANCHISE

Providing personalized one-on-one computer training – at your place and pace

(Palos, Park, IL) --- As Angela Fett gets ready to open her doors as the first computer moms franchisee in Illinois, she's busy with the usual start-up preparations. But after spending years in an corporate environment, Fett's ready to take control of her seven zip code territory and introduce Southern Chicago to computer moms, the company that wants to be your "outsourced IT department."

Based in Austin, Texas, computer moms is a national franchise where skilled mentors provide business and home-based computer users with training, repair, maintenance and technical support services. In the franchise name, "MOM" is an acronym for "Mentors On the Move." The mentors, who are contractors for the franchisee, go on-site at the client's home or office to provide customized services.

Computer moms offers training solutions on such popular programs as Microsoft Word and Excel, QuickBooks, ACT and Goldmine (as well as the Internet), in addition to technical repair and upgrade services of all kinds.

Fett, 33, stumbled upon computer moms last November while searching on the Internet for franchise opportunities. After a detailed investigation and many discussions with other franchisees, Fett purchased her Chicago suburb territory in April. With four part-time employees or mentors as they are called, Fett plans to open her doors for business on July 11. With a corporate background as an alliance partner manager for a software solutions company, Fett will run her franchise from her home in Palos Hills, IL. For Fett, it was an opportunity too good to pass up.

"I have the opportunity to invest in myself and my own abilities," she says. "And I have the opportunity to do something that I like to do. Also, there's the opportunity to build a team of mentors that are extremely knowledgeable and have an appreciation and a passion for technology and PCs."

Last year Ziff-Davis and USA Today reported that between computers and the Internet, the computer services market in this country is already at $300 billion. Computer training is growing at an explosive pace, from an estimated $19 billion in 1999 to over $41 billion by 2005, according to analysts' estimates.

With technology changing and improving everyday, Fett says she anticipates a broad range of clients, each with their own unique set of needs and goals. Fett says most customers will come to computer moms either with a training need to become more proficient on certain software application or they'll run into a problem.

"Certainly on the mentoring side, we provide training on anything from buying the right PC and printer, to training on the right software, to learning to surf the Internet and write an e-mail," she says. "On the small business side, we offer wireless networking, data backup and recovery and web page creation."

Clients are first introduced to computer moms through its mentors that go right to the customer's home or place of business. The mentors access the customer's

needs as well as their goals, skill level and ability to learn. Then they carefully draft a customized mentoring solution. Clients are billed per session.

Fett plans to market her new territory by placing inserts into some of the area papers, and sending out direct mailers to both small businesses and residential areas. She will also network through some of the local chambers of commerce.

While Fett has no immediate plans to expand into more territories, she says it's a definite possibility down the road. For now she would like to increase the brand awareness of the company and build a stable repeat and referral customer base.

"computer moms is for any individual looking to improve his/her computer skills and efficiency," she says. "Our clients range from seniors citizens wanting to learn to use email to keep in touch with the grandkids to business owners and their staff who want to increase productivity and the bottom lines of their business."

A computer moms franchise for a single territory requires an initial investment of between $30,000 and $35,000, plus a commitment to a monthly marketing budget of at least $2000-4000.