

Hoffman understands that All Minds Matter

YogaSource moves, and it grows

SOME KIDS NEED NAVIGATORS to take them through the maze of requirements set up by our schools. So do their parents. Some lose their way, resulting in anxiety and depression. And good minds can be wasted.

Caitlin Hoffman saw



SUZANNE CRISTALLO

many children lost in the school system during her 17 years teaching middle school in Saratoga and another three years in New York. Some of them became class disrupters, while others withdrew.

Homework was an issue for family battles. "I always was fascinated by these kids who seemed so bright but were left on the sidelines," Hoffman recalls. "They were fine minds being neglected." So she did something about it.

Four years ago, Hoffman, 51, and husband Donald, a physicist who works part-time in San Jose with Northrup Grumman, a provider of aerospace, electronic and information systems for the government, became first-time entrepreneurs when they started **All Minds Matter** at 476 E. Campbell Ave. in Campbell.

"It's more than a tutoring company," she says. An 11-year resident of Los Gatos, she views herself not only as an academic coach, but as a kind of diplomat, serving as liaison between parents and children and between schools and parents.

She meets with both groups to better understand where problems are. She works as an adviser for the moms and



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LEE FREITAS

The birdhouses that Lee Freitas constructs and offers for sale at a small store on his property on Black Rock are unique.

dads who seek solutions to disciplinary problems. She gives parents feedback from busy teachers on a student's progress and then consults with teachers to modify class work to suit the student.

"Parents give us permission for all of this," she notes. "We collaborate to reduce the stress on the kids." But mostly, they hope to serve as a bridge as schools are scrambling to become resources for the 21st century.

In 2,000 square feet of open space sectioned into 22 separate work spaces, Hoffman walks around helping her students. Besides **Donald Hoffman**, who offers an expertise rare in most math and science classrooms, there are seven college and high school students or "independent contractors," with majors in fields like pre-med, who mentor the older students.

"They are good, successful role models," Hoffman says. Most of her 30 students come from Los Gatos and Mitty high schools, Bellarmine College Prep and Fisher Middle School. They come three to four times a week. Hoffman says some have ADD, some experience anxiety and depression, and others are involved in

sports and need to keep their grades up. Mostly, they don't know how to work with their parents and vice versa.

Call the Hoffmans at 408.205.5838 or visit www.allmindsmatter.com.

FOR THE BIRDS—In the 1960s, Lee Freitas saw the wave of the future when he decided against following in the footsteps of his father, who grew prunes and walnuts in the Hays Avenue area of San Jose. Instead, he entered the booming construction industry, spending the next 40-plus years as a contractor of custom homes from Woodside to Monterey.

Two years ago, he envisioned the future again and retired. At 66, he's now a **builder of custom homes for birds**. His birdhouses are not the usual pastel Victorians found often in boutiques. Some are free forms that look like a fat No. 6 or an off-center letter Z, painted in bold, primary colors. Others are a mountain cabin and a waterfront cottage.

There's a solar-powered lighthouse, a Noah's ark, a covered wagon, a false-front Western store, a Greek edifice with Corinthian columns and a replica of a Frank Lloyd

Wright design.

"What's different to me is what holds my interest," says Freitas of the varied collection he offers to the public from a small store he's built on his property.

It takes him about two days to construct and paint a house. Prices run from \$25 to \$65. He uses cedar, redwood and fir, which he finds blackens easily when he uses a torch to emphasize a grain.

In deference to the dainty tastes of some girls, he will build a pink Victorian. "Sometimes I build special order houses to look like the customer," he says, noting he designed a tall, thin structure for a tall, thin person.

Wife Janis is returning this week to their home of 25 years on Black Road in Los Gatos. Her SUV is laden with driftwood. She collected it along the beach in the San Felipe area of Baja, Mexico.

Many customers became aware of Freitas' **Los Gatos Bird Houses** through the **Fiesta de Artes** in town last August where he sold 50 houses. Others have seen the sign in front of his home at 18332 Black Road (near the Bear Creek exit off Highway 17, south of town).

Call Freitas at 408.656.2682. **FOR SEAFOOD LOVERS**—**Billy Reynolds** grew up in Boston, of Irish-Italian parentage. He spent his summers in Maine, "feasting on lobster rolls, New England clam bakes, fresh fish, fried onion rings, fritters and crispy French fries."

His love of the boardwalk food led to his becoming a Boston chef after graduating from the University of Massachusetts. In 1996, he came to California to run a catering school and to introduce the Italian seafood concept to the Old Port Lobster Shack in Redwood City.

He says he was "surprised to find that authentic New England dining concepts

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