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**Award-winning business:** Kara Hachey, owner of Go-Go Gymnastics, supports five-year-old Simon Corey as he uses the rings as part of the company's gymnastics equipment setup at the University of New Brunswick West Gym on Tuesday afternoon.

# Go-Go Gymnastics catapults owner into business limelight

**Mobile gyms** | Idea has turned into successful business for UNB grad

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**N**ew Maryland's Kara Hachey has taken fitness mobile.

The founder of Go-Go Gymnastics came up with the innovative idea of what she describes as a gymnastics bookmobile or circus on wheels as a class project while completing her master's in business degree at the University of New Brunswick.

"We were in a graduating class and we had to design a business plan that

would fit the needs of the market to-day in our area," she said.

"It had to be New Brunswick-Fredericton related. I did gymnastics my whole life. I taught gymnastics. I just felt that Fredericton could benefit from another recreational gymnastics facility.

"But the entire idea behind this business plan was to design something new and innovative."

Her professors helped her tweak the idea and encouraged her not to set up another bricks-and-mortar building.

"We have to put this on wheels. How do you make kind of a physical fitness bookmobile?"

In 2006, when Hachey was 22, she decided to take Go-Go Gymnastics off a piece of paper and implement it as a business.

Now 28, she's been recognized for her business creativity by receiving the New Brunswick Young Entrepreneur Award from the Canadian Business Development Corp.

"We have a huge truck and trailer and it's got all this equipment and it unfolds and the whole idea was that in New Brunswick, we've got a lot of different rural areas where children don't have access to services. So if we could bring physical fitness to them, we would have a unique business," she said.

Hachey now has 11 rigs with the portable gyms.

"It's really huge. It's just under 6,000 pounds per gym and it fills an area 80 feet by 100 feet, so over a basketball court size, and that's the 'wow'

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# Mobile: Woman came up with idea for gyms that move

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part of the program. I'm committed to making sure it continues that way," she said.

"It's all state of the art. It's like the entire gym you would see in the Olympics, only it's made for kids, kind of a miniature version. There's bars, rings, balance beams, the whole shebang."

In the summer, the mobile gym hops from town to town and city to city doing week-long summer camps.

"I'll be in Chipman for a week, Ormoco for two, New Maryland for two and Fredericton for four and that's just what's close to home. Then during the school year, we have weekend recreational gymnastic classes."

Over the winter, she rents school gyms where she can unpack her gear and set up no matter what the weather is like outside.

"It just unfolds like Tetris. We set it up. We designed it to be mobile. It's cool," she said.

Hachey has 80 part-time and 15 full-time employees in New Brunswick.

Since 2006, the company has expanded into Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton. About 3,000 New Brunswick children per year attend

the company's programs, she said.

In addition to recreational classes and day camps, Go-Go Gymnastics provides special event rentals and caters to birthday parties.

Hachey has also created a sister company called Go-Go Gymnastics, which offers after-school care in District 18 elementary schools.

"We started that in September. It's the same idea. We work out of local elementary schools. It's a whole other company." Go-Go Gymnastics includes physical activity with literacy and leadership skills.

"The kids just simply get dismissed and go to our designated area and they get to do 20th century learning type, after-school programs. District 18 really helped with that... Some of our leadership schools in the Fredericton area are really advanced in trying to teach kids really neat things about how to be a leader," she said. "They wanted the supplementary opportunities."

Last September, Hachey started off with 11 students, but now has 87 enrolled in four after-school locations around town.

Gym classes run between \$150 to \$240 a term. The after-school program

costs about \$325 a month. Summer camps cost about \$160. All of the pricing is competitive to other private-sector suppliers, she said.

There's potential to go bigger.

"Fredericton was our pilot (project)... Once I get one more year in Fredericton, we'll open Go-Go Gymnastics to Saint John and then follow to Moncton as we did the gyms and then we'll franchise it out. It's really exciting. That's coming out," she said.

So far Hachey's been able to finance her business and has mentors helping her out.

"I've been able to keep it mine and local."

Canadian Business Development Corp. is a network of not-for-profit business development organizations that work with government and the private sector to meet the needs of small enterprises and assist with financing.

The award from Canadian Business Development Corp. is one of two presented annually to individuals in business in New Brunswick. It comes with a \$2,500 prize.

Hachey was given the opportunity to share her business development story at a gala dinner that took place in St. Andrews earlier this month.