

# New Ga. rink has it all in place

By Suzy Weinland

This July, a longtime member of the roller skating rink family opened a second venue in Georgia. This time in Sharpsburg.

Angela Williams, along with sons Michael and Clint Couey, cut the ribbon on their new 24,000 square foot state-of-the-art family entertainment center on July 19. Starlite Family Fun Center is located about 18 to 20 miles south of Atlanta, in the “up and growing” county of Coweta. The new rink offers the community roller skating, Zone laser tag, a multi-level indoor playground by PlaySmart and an arcade with the latest video and redemption games.

Starlite Sharpsburg will be run by Williams’ son Michael. The family owns a second Starlite rink in Stockbridge, Ga., which has been in operation for 19 years and is run by her son, Clint. The Couey-Williams family has been a part of the RSA and roller skating in Georgia for 31 years. Michael and Clint are third-generation rink operators, along with cousin Christopher Couey, who runs the Sparkles rink in Lawrenceburg, Ga. Grandparents Albert and Leita Couey were the driving force who laid the groundwork for the family decades ago.

In setting up the new Sharpsburg rink, Williams called upon longtime friends and industry professionals, including Jim and Cindy Anderson (owners of FunQuest Family Entertainment Center in Lynchburg, Va.) for the layout and design, Kim Wall of Floor Systems for installation of the solid maple floor, and Jenny Nash at Simply Profitable to assist with marketing.

Prior to opening, Williams and Sales & Marketing Director Tara Henry held a hiring day.

“Applicants partner up and do team events, and we have them do silly things like dance to see if they have the right personality for the job,” explained Henry.

The new location gives Williams a chance to try some new attractions and offerings. “We will offer 3D laser tag parties,” shared Williams. “The room has been painted with a 3D effect. Our birth-



The new Starlite Family Fun Center in Sharpsburg, Ga. showcases the latest video and redemption games in its arcade.

day party plans will include an offering for 3D laser tag with glasses.” Additionally, one of their party rooms will be painted with 3D paint to allow for a complete 3D experience. Williams said before the doors even opened, she had already booked 20 birthday parties.

For inexperienced skaters, the rink will offer skating lessons, including use of trainers for the littlest tykes. Toddler Time parties will be geared specifically to the under five crowd. “They can ride their own toys on the skate floor,” said Henry, adding that the parties take place one Tuesday morning and one Friday morning a month. “We do it that way so those who go preschool Monday and Friday and those who go Tuesday and Thursday can all have an opportunity to come.

“Within that time frame we offer them pizza, fruit punch, game tokens and they play on the skate floor and in the playground,” she said. “We do it because it’s the first time we get this age group into the building. We get them in for a year or

two and hopefully they’re going to become skaters.”

Williams said that due to customer requests, the snack bar will be branching out with some healthier food choices such as yogurt and bruschetta. They will also offer beer and wine for the adults and are looking into getting a cappuccino machine. Of course there are the hit items as well, such as french fries and Icces.

“I listen to customers as they’re walking out the door,” said Henry. “They are deciding where to go to eat. They do ask for healthy foods, but there is a very short

shelf life on that stuff.”

Williams is excited for this new venture, and is looking forward to introducing yet another young generation to roller skating. “I have always tried to have a family and kid-friendly roller rink. I’ve always had little kids, so always wanted a place for them to play and be comfortable. We’ve never really pushed to teens.”

And where there are little ones, parents will follow – with their pocketbooks. “We want the parents to stay in our building, so we put in big screen TVs for the sports programs and comfortable seating – booths – because we want the parents to stay!”



Starlite Sharpsburg's solid wood floor is polished and ready for skaters.

By Mike Jasorka (www.rollerdames.com)