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Beth Anspach: Business healthy for Vandalia teen

By Beth Anspach

Contributing Writer

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At a time when most young people are thinking about their next fast-food meal, Corey Henningsen was doing the opposite.

"When I was 15, I was very interested in health," Henningsen said. "I was working at a healthfood store and also had experience at an organic farm, and I loved the fresh-food concept."

Now 18, Henningsen is managing a new juice bar, "Locolicious," located inside Studio Zumba, 698 W. National Road in Vandalia. The idea for Locolicious was Henningsen's, and the space for this new and already flourishing small business was provided by Studio Zumba owners, Doug and Joan Jones, who also happen to be Henningsen's mother and stepfather.

"We had an extra room here in the studio and were trying to figure out what to do with it," Henningsen said. "I proposed the juice bar idea and they loved it."

According to Joan Jones, Studio Zumba already offers so many choices for exercise, but she felt something was missing. "The health and nutrition benefits of eating well need to be part of the whole package," Jones said. "So a fresh juice after a hard workout seemed a good fit."

Locolicious features fresh juices and smoothies, and many of the creations are Henningsen's. "I wanted something unique and different from the smoothie places around town," Henningsen said. "We don't add any sugar and all our ingredients are the freshest quality."

Henningsen's dedication to health includes not only fruit juices, but vegetables as well. "Most people think vegetables taste pretty terrible, but when you mix them with juice, they actually give more balance to the taste," he said.

As the studio packs in people on any given class night, Henningsen is busy mixing and pouring as quickly as people order. And though he offers some more traditional concoctions featuring smoothie staples, bananas and berries, he also serves up some unique beverages with ingredients like crystal manna — a blue algae and green tea — well-known for its antioxidants.

Henningsen's devotion to living a healthy life style began in high school when he became passionate about animal rights issues. He became a practicing vegan, avoiding all food items made from animals, including cheeses and other dairy products. He also developed an interest in marketing and after high school, began taking college

courses in film.

And though he admits that he hasn't done a lot to advertise Locolicious, he is pleased at how popular it has already become.

"People come in and are sometimes indecisive," Henningsen said. "I encourage them to try new things like a juice made from beets and celery or a green smoothie I call Ecuadorian Euphoria. Ninety-five percent of the time, people really like them."

And as he continues serving up as many as 35 drinks in a four-hour shift on busy evenings, Henningsen dreams of even more business in the future — not just from the Zumba class attendees but from people who just stop in to enjoy a unique and healthy beverage.

"I want this to be my full-time concentration one day," Henningsen said. "Seeing that people are enjoying my own creations and not only that but they help make them healthier — that's a great combination!"

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