

Family takes sports nutrition to the Max

By Sarah Ruhoff
sruholl@gmail.com

For the Herkes family, sports nutrition is a family thing.

Scott and Karen Herkes, with their four children, own and are the sole employees of two Max Muscle Sports Nutrition stores in the Quad-Cities.

Everyone in the family is a certified sports nutrition specialist.

"It's been really good," Mr. Herkes said. "It's a great thing for the kids because it's hard to get employment now. They aren't scrubbing dishes, they're learning something they can use for the rest of their lives."

The family opened its second store at 4335 16th St., Moline, on March 23. The Bettendorf location at 852 Middle Road has been open 2 1/2 years.

Before opening the stores, Mrs. Herkes was an aerobics instructor and Mr. Herkes was vice president for sales and marketing at a company that sold industrial control equipment.

He said he always has had an interest in personal fitness and long has wanted to open his own business.

"I love this business," Mr. Herkes said. "I have a passion for it. Owning your own business allows you to have a lot more control of your own future. Corporate life can be pretty volatile these days."

When a new customer comes in, the first step is an analysis of their eating and exercise habits and a body fat analysis, done with near infrared spectroscopy technology. That helps them discern how many pounds of fat the customer can lose and how many exercise calories they need to burn to get there.

Mr. Herkes said a lifestyle change is how his customers reach and maintain their goals.



Paul Colletti / staff

Max Muscle opened in Moline about two months ago and is run by the Herkes family. From left: mom Karen, family friend Michele Jamison, daughter Lauren, sons Brent and Spencer, and dad Scott, at right, all are active in the store's operation.

"Starvation diets don't work," he said. "People will lose 10 or 15 pounds, then they'll plateau and not know why. If you're not eating properly, you need to start there. How you eat and what you eat and portion size is important."

The analysis is free, but a customer pays for a nutrition plan that fits their specific dietary needs, which Mr. Herkes said is very exact on portion size and quantities.

The store carries a wide variety of nutritional supplements, but the reason Mr. Herkes says most people come is to learn how to reach their health goals.

"It's really about education," he said. "There's so much marketing on nutri-

tion in the market and a lot of it's false."

Their customers range from teens to professional athletes and from middle-aged people looking to lose body fat to people in their 70s who want to stay in shape.

"There are people that pop up, lots of different people," Mr. Herkes said. "It's very interesting."

Six months after the Bettendorf location opened, Mr. Herkes began giving nutrition presentations around the Quad-Cities for various groups and companies.

"It's not a supplement pitch," he said. "It's how to lose body fat and how to eat to lose body fat."