



Taking on the Kids Obesity Crisis



Sophie Foster

Sophie Foster used to teach tiny tots to play the violin. Observing the coordination requirements for such a complex task, and observing the development of her own new baby, she decided to create a programme to help kids with their physical, emotional and intellectual development. In 1988, Jumping Beans, the early childhood gym programme, was born.

From modest beginnings in the garage of a rented West Auckland house, Jumping Beans is now poised to take on the world. Classes are about to start up in a retail mall in Singapore, as a result of the sale of the first Jumping Beans Master Licence to the Modern Montessori International group earlier this year.

Jumping Beans is the brainchild of early childhood music teacher and children's writer, Sophie Foster and Olympic Athlete and Business Coach, Jerome Hartigan.

They designed and built the specialised gym equipment from first principles in their garage, (the overflow often spilling out into their bedroom) and purchased a van to transport it to various community halls around Auckland. Parents book in for a term of hour long classes once a week for their babies and preschoolers aged six weeks to six years. The Jumping Beans classes are child centred and the children learn educational gymnastics, ball skills and movement to music in a fun, safe and stimulating environment.

Sophie came up with the name 'Jumping Beans', as it represents the tremendous potential with which all young children are born. Just as a seed needs adequate nurturing to flourish, all babies, given plenty of love and nurturing, will grow up into strong and healthy individuals. The goal of Jumping Beans is to inspire as many children as possible, and their parents, to be happy and healthy for the peaceful future of the planet.

With the child obesity crisis being topical, a lack of 'Physical Literacy'

has become the new buzz word. Combine this with the now mainstream knowledge of the vital importance of infant stimulation in the first five years, in order to develop the brain, and the Jumping Beans classes are very much in demand.

Last year, Sophie took over sole directorship of Jumping Beans International and travelled to Singapore to the Global Licencing and Franchising Expo. There she met international franchise lawyer Stephen Giles, partner at Deacons International law firm in Melbourne and chairman of the Franchise Council of Australia. Stephen has advised over 200 franchisors and has a client list that includes ANZ, Boost Juice, Oportos and Caltex. His expertise in franchises and his negotiating skills proved invaluable for Jumping Beans' first foray into international expansion and he was instrumental in securing the first international deal.

"Sophie is to be congratulated for using her excellent networking skills to sell a New Zealand grown franchise in Singapore," says Simon Lord, editor of *Franchise New Zealand* magazine and website.

Sophie gets frequent enquiries for Jumping Beans licences from around the world through the Franchise NZ website. Plans are in place for an international rollout through master licencing in Australia, USA, Europe and Asia.

"Jumping Beans is poised to become a global brand representing kids health and wellbeing," says Sophie, who has recently returned from the Cannes TV markets (Mipcom) where she received

an excellent response to her new Jumping Beans TV concept that is focused on inspiring kids to exercise. As a result, she is in dialogue with several major TV networks and distributors as well as International Licencing agent, Fred Gaffney.

Sophie and Jerome's new book, *Move Baby Move*, linking early exercise with brain development and learning, has just hit the New Zealand bookshelves. Publisher Random House has received several enquiries for overseas rights.

There are currently six Jumping Beans gym licencees in New Zealand who are operating classes in Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga. Licences are still available for Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.



For further information email Sophie at: sophie@jumpingbeans.net

Sophie's Success Secrets

- 1 Attach a higher purpose to your business and the right people will be naturally attracted to your light.
- 2 Know your strengths and use them to push through your fears.
- 3 Be crystal clear about your values and goals. Your razor sharp focus will power you forward.
- 4 Always follow-up, success is in the follow through.
- 5 Keep learning and growing. Enjoy the journey.