

DEERFIELD BEACH

The BEST PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK

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demonstrate
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Water, golf courses lure us to the great outdoors and give a boost to our economy

Boys and their boats

Volleyball Star creates her own business opportunities



DEERFIELD BEACH - If seeing a need and filling it is one of the requirements for business success, Cindy Phillips could be the poster girl. Only thing is, in the beginning she was as surprised as the next person that coaching young girls in the skills of sand volleyball could become a career.

Two years ago, Phillips, 33, was tending bar at beach restaurants in between beach volleyball competitions when Mobil gas station owner Jim Baketselos asked her to coach his two girls for the summer. She agreed and the word spread. It took only three months for Phillips to catch a glimpse of her future. She quit

the bar business and started coaching full time.

Private and group sessions provided her enough income to bring in other coaches and then this year she incorporated a California concept into her business plan and initiated a summer volleyball club, Club Beach Dig. In the winters, she coaches an indoor club, Club Florida. There are 100 kids in the summer camp, who for \$225 a month get twice weekly workouts and train for five sand tournaments. Girls outnumber the boys, perhaps because Olympic gold medalist Misty May-Treanor lives in Coral Springs. Early this year, May-Treanor recorded the most wins, 73, of any woman player.

Phillips still expresses surprise that she can make a living doing something she is passionate about. It's a passion that she transmits to her young players who become much better indoor players because of their time on the sand. "They jump higher, they move faster. Their high school coaches ask them what they've been doing to improve so much," Phillips said.

The disdain indoor coaches once had for the outdoor sport is changing, she notes. Playing in sand is the best way for an athlete to improve in the sport. Fewer players mean more touches of the ball. The soft sand means the player has to work harder to increase speed, agility and leaping ability.

Although she played varsity basketball at the University of Toronto and didn't take up volleyball until she was 25, Phillips is a strong believer in the benefits of the game. It's a great conditioning sport, can be played for years and results in few injuries. Still competitive, she holds two national championship titles and by June had won three beach volleyball events.

Phillips has expanded her summer camp to Delray Beach and Miami and is eyeing Florida's west coast. She also sees opportunities to develop merchandise carrying her Beach Dig logo and to one day set up her program all over the state.



Niki Esposito works on her return at Phillips' Beach Dig Camp.

"There are loads of these programs in California," Phillips said. "But there was nothing here. I'm just happy it's caught on so quickly."

Phillips now hires nine coaches for her camps including former AVP player Eric Wurts and pro Capri Hilgendorf. As her business grows, she depends more and more on her website to spread the word and credits her website designer for much of her expansion.

Not content to limit her coaching to 10-18 year olds, Phillips has started a health regime for women who meet twice a week at Deerfield's beach to train their minds, bodies and spirits. Women of all ages and fitness levels come to work out, talk about their lives and hear passages from inspirational books.

It's just one more way Phillips is seeing a need and filling it.

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