

Kid buying power broadens store's potential



Erin Schwartz gets a look at the latest styles in kid's shoes by Assistant Manager Larry Gora at West Bloomfield's new Kid Power Shoe Store. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

By JUDITH BERNE

The buying influence of the younger set is reflected in the newest store in town — Kid Power Shoe World at West Bloomfield Plaza.

Kid buying power is the rationale behind the name, reports Larry Hack, who opened the franchise just in time for the recent wind storm to blow his roof off and the ice storm to knock out his electrical power. The store, with New York-based headquarters, is on Orchard Lake Road, south of Maple.

The store, complete with slide, two-story fort and fun house-style mirror is deliberately designed to woo children into its club house atmosphere.

Blue skies, white clouds and greenery are the backdrop for bleachers where youngsters are fitted; a park bench setting is for pre-teens.

"It's a place where kids are encouraged to have a good time," says Hack,

whose family has been in the shoe business for 60 years.

Years back, Hack reports, it was common to see kids leaving a shoe store in tears because of the shoes their parents made them buy. "Now it's mom who's crying," Hack says, documenting the shift in power.

KID POWER represents a new path for the Birmingham-based Hack Shoe Co., whose previous stores have been directed at the whole family's feet.

The West Bloomfield store is the sixth Kid Power franchise to open nationwide, and the first in Michigan.

"It is a completely separate operation from our other stores," Hack explains.

Main feature is the Kid Power brand of sneaker which comes in "15 delicious flavors," according to Hack.

"Spring fever," a sneaker with flowers pushing up from its sole, and a skate board shoe are two novelty items.

Hack is eagerly awaiting shipment of a "magic shoe" which will allow buyers to perform tricks with it according to accompanying instructions.

Canvas duffie and tote bags, warm ups and socks sporting the Kid Power emblem of a muscular type hoisting barbells are available.

Infants through teens up to size eight can find shoes at the new shop. Minute canvas sneakers and sandals, some with "I love you, Grandma" inscribed on them, are displayed. No high heeled shoes are stocked.

KID POWER stores throughout the country look alike, says Hack, although they are individually owned.

In fact their interiors are prefabricated and shipped via truck to each location complete with carpenter, wallpaper and painter.

"The whole thing was built in three days," Hack reports.

Exhibit consists of grad work

Sixty-two single-person art exhibitions at Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum mean just one thing — it's graduation time.

"Student Degree Shows," April 27 through May 6 and May 11-20, consist of pieces chosen by graduating students to reflect their work at the Academy. Exhibition in the show is a graduation requirement.

Design students will exhibit their work in the first section and architecture students in the second. Student work from all other departments — ceramics, fiber, graphics, metalsmithing, painting, photography and sculpture — will be in both sections.

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