

The Little Green Tambourine brings an eco beat to kids in the Valley

The Green Scene with Olivia French

I walk into the Little Green Tambourine studio, still in its final stages of construction, and am greeted warmly by Megan Nisenson and Suzanne DeRosa. As DeRosa finishes sweeping the bamboo floor with her broom made out of recycled bottle caps, I survey the bright, airy studio sitting a-glow in the afternoon sun. The Little Green Tambourine is a healthy living creative arts studio founded by pre-K teachers Nisenson and DeRosa. They founded the new Canton-based studio to offer kids a positive learning environment to explore healthy living and expand their creativity. The Little Green Tambourine will begin offering a variety of classes to children from birth through 13 years on Sept. 15. Classes will include yoga, healthy cooking, organic gardening, recycled art, voice, musical adventures and preteen improvisation. Nisenson and DeRosa also plan healthy, green birthday parties for parents and will sell biodegradable yoga mats, organic yoga pants and reusable water bottles at their studio.

Nisenson and DeRosa designed their studio to be as healthy as possible for kids. "We are both into healthy living and we wanted healthy options for kids. We tackled the healthy aspect first, and then [The Little Green Tambourine] evolved into being a place that is friendly to the environment," explains DeRosa. Nisenson and DeRosa keep their studio eco-friendly by using low VOC paint, water-based primers, energy efficient light bulbs and appliances, reused furniture, bamboo flooring and other little things that they can afford. The entrepreneurs explain that anyone can create a green space if they are willing to put in a little extra time and effort. "We try to be as environmentally

friendly as we can be. We want people to see what we have done here and think, 'Oh, I can do that, too.' However, we're not pushing our beliefs on our families. Anyone, whatever shade of green they may be, should feel comfortable coming into our studio," DeRosa explains.

When describing their teaching style, Nisenson and DeRosa say that they will offer an intimate, hands-on approach to learning and that the individuality of their students will be respected. "In our studio, all children are allowed to learn and express themselves at their own pace. In the learning process, we act as facilitators offering non-judgmental guidance, encouragement, patience and support," says Nisenson. For example, in the healthy cooking class for 5- to 8-year-olds, students explore organic ingredients through all five senses and cook a healthy snack, recording the "recipe of the week" in their own take home cookbooks. In the yoga class for 5- to 8-year-olds, students practice deep breathing, peaceful relaxation, and fun, imaginative yoga poses.

Nisenson and DeRosa's passion for teaching and excitement for their new eco business is evident as they enthusiastically chat about their plans to support non-profit organizations such as Treeswing, a program that aims to build more healthy, active communities and prevent childhood obesity, or Healthy Child Healthy World, an organization that strives to protect children from environmental exposures and educate communities to make well informed lifestyle improvements. The Little Green Tambourine holds an open house and fundraiser party for the Healthy Child Healthy World organization on Aug. 16.

For more information and a class schedule for The Little Green Tambourine, visit thelittlegreentambourine.com or stop by the studio at 166 Albany Tpke, Rt 44, Canton.



Above: Five-year-old Sarah DeRosa with the puppet she made and named 'Baby.'



Right: Little Green Tambourine owners Suzanne DeRosa and Megan Nisenson

Olivia French is a 16-year-old Loomis Chaffee student and Farmington resident. She is an avid environmentalist and is a member of the eco conscious Project Green club at her school.