

Fun on wheels: The Fun Bus comes to Berkley, southeastern Mass.



Taunton Gazette Photo by Dave DeMelia

Shannon and Paul Murphy, owners of the Fun Bus in Berkley, help Sarah Lawrence, 6, slide out the back of the bus.



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BERKLEY —

Typically, school buses aren't associated with fun; they're considered merely a convenient means of transportation. The uncomfortable, sticky plastic seats, bright yellow paint and agitated bus monitors never make the ride particularly enjoyable.

But the owners of the Fun Bus, Shannon and Paul Murphy, said they are determined to change the school bus' generally negative image.

Fun Bus is a national franchise committed to providing “fitness and fun on wheels.” Painted in bright green, the Fun Bus’ interior has been outfitted with carpeted and padded floors and walls, and its seats have been replaced with slides, [tumbling mats](#), punching bags and balance beams. The Fun Bus is also climate-controlled, allowing it to stay open year-round.

The Murphys heard about the idea after searching the Internet for new ways to spice up their two daughters’ [birthday parties](#).

“We found the website for Fun Bus and noticed the franchise headquarters were in New Jersey,” Paul Murphy said. “We noticed that there was nothing like it around here so we looked into it and visited the headquarters to see if we could start our own franchise in Massachusetts.”

A stay at home mom, Shannon Murphy said she figured running the Fun Bus would give her plenty of time to spend with her daughters.

The couple went to the franchise’s New Jersey headquarters, where they were trained to provide structured fitness [classes](#) and became certified to perform CPR on children between 18 months- and seven years-old.

Paul Murphy said no special license is needed to drive the bus because it is supposed to remain stationary once children are on board (since the bus doesn’t have seats or mandatory air breaks, it wouldn’t be legal to operate, anyway).

Once the Murphys had met all the franchise’s requirements, they received their Fun Bus and staked their claim to Bristol County.

Now providing 30-minute fitness classes to area preschools and private functions like birthday parties and special events, the Murphys said they are excited to bring fitness and fun on wheels to eastern Massachusetts.

“We’re hoping to get the word out,” Paul Murphy said. “We’re currently scheduled to have the Fun Bus at the Lights On Festival in Taunton and we’re hoping to be at the Christmas parade.”