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## **Family Finds Cool Way To Work Together**

**By Robin Frames**  
*For the Journal*

Laughing high school students were dancing, acting, turning cartwheels and trying to sing in front of the soon-to-open Cold Stone Creamery ice cream shop in Cottonwood Corners.

These would-be employees were undergoing hiring interviews, which had been appropriately renamed "auditions." Their performing is an integral part of their work.

"At various times, such as when they get a tip, they sing a song or do a dance," says Bill Lord, father of the family that is taking on the running of Albuquerque's latest Cold Stone shop. "We're hiring the kids not only because they're hard workers, but because we want happy, outgoing employees who don't mind being silly."

Grand opening day is Oct. 4.

Bill says going to buy ice cream is a good opportunity for members of families to have fun together—and when they leave, to want to come back.

Cold Stone is also a very different kind of ice cream franchise. The ice cream and waffle cones are made fresh every day, and customers get to concoct their own mix of ice cream, fruit, nuts, candy, pie fillings, cake batter, flavors and other ingredients.

Everything is then mixed together on the store's unique granite "cold stone" that keeps the ice cream frozen.

One of the unusual features of this particular Cold Stone shop is that all members of the Lord family are helping to run the partnership, which is officially called Lords of Ice Cream, LLC, dba Cold Stone Creamery, Store No. 877.

Jennifer, 22, is the general manager and the only family member working full time at the shop.

Helping out when they can will be Mark, 22, Jennifer's husband, who works for a market research firm; Tracy Lord, 17, a senior at Sandia High School; and Mark and Tracy's parents: Bill Lord, a pharmacist who works for a company that manages hospital pharmacies; and Lynette Lord, who works with severely emotionally disturbed children. All are in addition to the 20-member part-time staff of high school students.

Lynette says the idea for the Cold Stone franchise came from Bill's brother, Roger Lord, who owns a Cold Stone franchise in Las Cruces. The family went down and worked there for a few months to see first-hand what kind of time commitment was required and how much work was involved.

"Then we decided to go ahead and apply for the franchise," Lynette recalls. The company says it is the fastest-growing ice cream franchise in the country, even though it approves less than 2 percent of the applicants.

"The franchise fee was \$31,000," Jennifer says, although I think it's gone up since then. When you figure in all the equipment, the total start-up cost comes to around \$200,000. We lease the building."

Jennifer and Lynette attended a two-week, intensive training course at the Cold Stone corporate headquarters in Scottsdale, Ariz.

"The company has been extremely helpful in getting us set up and being there when we need any kind of assistance," Lynette says. "Even most members of upper management started out somewhere running an ice cream shop, and so they understand the stresses, rewards and hard work that go along with ownership."

Cold Stone, founded in Tempe, Ariz., in 1988, became a franchise system in 1995. There are now more than 450 stores operating in 40 states and the U.S. Caribbean, and the company plans to have a total of 1,000 up and running by 2004, including every state.

For those overwhelmed by the possibilities of ice cream, mix-in and flavor combinations, Cold Stone offers a few suggestions. Among them are:

- "Nights in White Chocolate"— white chocolate ice cream with a double serving of white chocolate chips, caramel and whipped topping.
- "Monkey Bites"— Banana ice cream with pecans, coconut, crunch bar and banana.
- "Mud Pie Mojo"— Coffee ice cream with peanut butter, Oreos, roasted almonds, fudge and whipped topping.
- "Fruit Stand Rendezvous"— Strawberry ice cream with graham cracker pie crust, white chocolate chips, strawberries and banana.

Instead of shipping in ready-made ice cream from a central location, the ice cream is made from a Cold Stone base with genuine ice cream ingredients, Jennifer says.

"Still, only Cold Stone knows the complete recipe. They send us four ice cream bases: sweet cream, chocolate, yogurt and sorbet. From that we make up batches of a dozen different flavors, fresh each day."

There are constantly new ice cream creations being invented, by customers as well as franchise owners.

The Lords don't yet have a chile ice cream but say they are working on some recipes that might make popular Southwestern favorites.

Besides its regular premium ice cream, Cold Stone offers several low-calorie frozen desserts, including yogurt, Italian sorbet, no-sugar-added ice cream and low- and nonfat mix-ins.

Jennifer adds that the shop also has an ice-cream cake program that provides cakes for birthdays and other celebrations. The cakes are made in layers of alternating ice cream and cake.

The Lords' Cold Stone Creamery shop is located in Cottonwood Corners at 3703 Ellison Road at N.M. 528, west of Coors.

It is the newest of six Cold Stones to open in Albuquerque. The only other one on the West Side is in Riverside Plaza, at Montañó and Coors. Cold Stone also has locations in Farmington, Las Cruces, Los Lunas and Santa Fe.

The Oct. 4 Grand Opening will feature a clown, a band, and prizes that will include drawings for "free ice cream for a year."