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COLD STONE CREAMERY

COLD STONE CREAMERY OPENS IN HALLANDALE

by Marylynne Newmark

Have you heard about the new ice cream sensation sweeping the country called Cold Stone Creamery®? It's the #1 ice cream franchise chain in the country that has become a marketing phenomenon about to achieve breakthrough brand status. At any Cold Stone Creamery location, fresh and creamy ice cream is made daily.

Customers select their basic flavor and then choose from a tremendous array of mix-in's to create custom combinations that are blended on a frozen slab right in front of their eyes.



Sound good? If you live in Hallandale, Hollywood, Aventura or North Miami Beach, you are in luck, because one of these sensational stores will soon be opening in your neighborhood. The one in Hallandale will be opening the end of January, Hollywood will open the end of February, Aventura the end of March, and North Miami Beach in October.

The orchestrator is Michael Schatz, a former broker and floor trader on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange who is now a franchisee of Cold Stone Creamery, with plans to open even more locations next year. Schatz plans to introduce you to the Cold Stone experience within the next few weeks, when he opens the first Cold Stone Creamery in the RK Diplomat Mall on Hallandale Beach Boulevard. Opening date is set for Friday, January 23, 2004.

That weekend Schatz personally will host a celebration for the entire family that includes a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, entertainment, face painting, balloons, giveaways, and all kinds of fun for kids of all ages.

Here's how the Cold Stone experience works. Basic ice cream flavors, such as French vanilla, coffee, cinnamon, chocolate, mint and Cold Stone's signature proprietary flavors sweet cream and cake batter are made fresh daily in the store. You choose the one you want to be your base flavor. Then, you select the mix-in's you want, such as your favorite candies, brownies, sponge cake, pie fillings, fudge, nuts, etc., and watch the Cold Stone crew members create your very own flavor on an ice cold slab, just for you. You can have the finished product served in a cup or homemade waffle cone.

"There are three sizes to our portions," says Schatz, "They are called 'Like It!', 'Love It!' and 'Gotta Have It!'. The Ultimate Bucket is great for dinner parties, or for those times that you really, really Gotta Have It..."

Cold Stone Creamery has come a long way from the days when Donald and Susan Sutherland opened their first store in Tempe in 1988. In 1990, they expanded to the Phoenix metropolitan area with the second store. Ken Burk joined them as a partner and CEO in 1994 and Doug Ducey as President in 1995, with the sole purpose of business development and expansion. Stores began popping up all over the West. In 1997, Cold Stone sold its one-millionth creation and opened its first store in Alaska. The next year, Cold Stone crossed the continent and opened in Jacksonville, FL. The first international franchise was awarded in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. 2002 was a monumental year. Cold Stone Creamery awarded its 500th franchise, which included the opening of its 250th store, including one on Times Square in New York City with major window exposure. That year, Cold Stone Creamery held its first annual "World's Largest Ice Cream Social" to benefit the Make-a-Wish Foundation. In 2003, as Cold Stone launched a brand new flavor, Cake Batter Ice Cream, the company was ranked #72 in Entrepreneur Magazine's 'Annual Franchise 500', and was ranked among INC. magazine's '500 List of America's Fastest Growing Private Companies'. By Spring of that year, Cold Stone Creamery opened its 800th store.

"If decisions are too tough for you to make while standing in front of all those goodies," says Schatz, "try one of our Cold Stone originals." One of the newest suggested flavors is Fruit Stand Rendezvous, which is made with strawberry ice cream, graham cracker pie crust, white chocolate chips, strawberries and banana (in the photo on this page). Another new flavor introduced this year is a fat-free no-sugar-added ice cream called Sinless Sweet Cream.

"Without a doubt," says Michael Schatz, "passion is the beating heart of Cold Stone Creamery. That includes passion for people, passion for success and above all, a passion for ice cream. That began with the Sutherlands, who searched everywhere for ice cream with a 'smooth and creamy' texture. It continued with their concept of giving people exactly what they want and watching it come into being. Their delight has been in watching the smiles on faces across 42 states, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

This past October, the web site for Cold Stone Creamery had 9.7 million hits, which averages at 315,000 a day. Four thousand people apply each month to become a franchisee.

"We go beyond great ice cream," says Schatz. "We deliver entertainment, as well." Schatz explains that in order to 'audition' for a job at Cold Stone Creamery, crew members are required to sing and interact with people and kids waiting on line, before they can be considered to be hired. "We only want happy employees working for us. We need to see those smiles on their faces before we can expect to see them on our customers'."

This was a big jump for Michael Schatz and his family, but an easy decision. "After spending twenty years in windy Chicago," he said, "selling the best ice cream in the world in one of the nation's best markets was an easy choice." Between his years at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and his present status as a franchisee of Cold Stone Creamery, Schatz refined his business skills with a private equity company that raised assets for existing companies and hedge funds. During that time, he invested his own money in several companies, and decided that the next check that he wrote would be for himself.

"Becoming a franchisee was a natural next step," says Schatz. "I did extensive due-diligence in the franchise market, and found Cold Stone Creamery out-dazzling everyone else."

Schatz is looking forward to welcoming the South Broward/ North Dade community to Cold Stone Creamery at RK Diplomat Mall on Friday, January 23, beginning at 11 AM. Look for the lights and action, the entertainers, and the smiling faces enjoying their own specially selected Cold Stone Creamery delights. Then, you can join them with smiles of your own, and then repeat the enjoyment in February in Hollywood, in March in Aventura and in October in North Miami Beach.

Schatz and Cold Stone Creamery believe in working very closely with charities, and will be very happy to participate in local fund raising efforts.

Cold Stone Creamery Hallandale is opening at 1723 E. Hallandale Beach Boulevard in the RK Diplomat Mall on Friday, January 23rd and throughout the entire weekend. For additional information, the phone number is 954-454-5445. Or, better yet, check the web site at www.coldstonecreamery.com.