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# Franchise / Franchisee

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→ **FAMILY AFFAIR**  
Urban Air Adventure  
Park franchisees  
Rachelle Nurse  
and Joseph Goodly  
with their kids.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF URBAN AIR ADVENTURE PARK

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## The Fun of Franchising

What's it like running a business where all the customers are having a great time? by **CHLOE ARROJADO**

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**R**achelle Nurse and Joseph Goodly were not having fun. They're a married nurse and physician—yes, Nurse is a nurse—and they wanted to buy a franchise to create a new source of income for their family, but most brands were too risky, or just didn't get them excited. Then, in 2016, a neighbor invited their daughter to a birthday party at an Urban Air Adventure Park—and once they arrived, they realized this fun zone might be a fun investment. Its appeal was twofold. First, they could manage it alongside their full-time work schedules. And second, it encouraged their now 10- and 13-year-old children to power off their video games and enjoy some face-to-face play. In 2018 the couple opened a Texas location, and in 2020 they added another New York location to the 153-park network. The pandemic complicated operations at times, but the couple has found that their customers are more than ready to fill their social void.

**You're in the business of giving people a good time. Does that make the business itself a good time?**

**NURSE:** Franchisees are so serious—whether it's the operators and investments or making what you need in order to survive as a family. At the end of the day, sometimes we've just got to take a little step backward, smile, know that we'll get through it, and not be so tough on ourselves. We've touched so many people. I remember a young family coming in and the father ran up to us because he knew that [COVID-19 restrictions] wouldn't let us continue to be open in New York, and he said, "I need you to stay open because I lost my son a few months ago." It was the first time his family had been out, and they had a blast. We have kids who come in here and just forget about all the other challenges in their lives.

**You both come from the healthcare industry, where you work with seasoned pros. At Urban Air, you mostly employ young people. What has that been like?**

**NURSE:** Young people today have a different core work ethic and different expectations. They will challenge you. We're able to say, "You made a mistake, but let me show you how we would do that."

**GOODLY:** To be quite honest, teenagers have very busy schedules. They have sports, various other activities, and family commitments. So we have to continually hire staff. That's been a challenge, but it's also been rewarding. It feels good to give these teenagers opportunities. It feels good to give back to the community, and give these kids their first jobs so they can get ready for the workforce.

**Owning an adventure park sounds like a kid's dream. How has owning a franchise impacted your kids?**

**NURSE:** If you ask our parents what they wanted for us, it was for us to go to college, to get a good job, and to work for somebody else for the rest of our lives. That's not what we encourage. College is not optional for our kids—however, we do encourage innovation. We tend to have conversations about innovation and entrepreneurship, and when they come up with an idea, we ask: How do you patent that? How do you grow it? How do you market it? How do you get it out there to sell it to somebody?

**GOODLY:** I tell our kids to get overexcited, scale an idea aggressively, and cover it with altruism. That's how you make it in the world. So they're already thinking of that.