

Begin Here Go Surfing?

In the true spirit of "Begin Here, Go Anywhere" ... Kauai Gymnastics Academy in Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii, is proud to be a part of the success of the International Tandem Surfing Association 2008 World Champions, Kalani and Ala Vierra.

Two years ago, Kalani Vierra achieved success in tandem surfing with partner Blanche Yoshida. Then his daughter, 11-year-old Ala, expressed interest in giving it a try. The Vierras made a family decision to allow Ala to be her dad's new tandem partner. Since Ala took gymnastics at KGA throughout 2006, they called to book some private lessons in the spotting belt. Beginning in October 2007, Kalani and Ala, spent time working up from the spotting belt to unaided lift skills. Jack Leonard, co-owner and head coach, worked with them on honing each lift to include the complete move, using gymnastics knowledge to interpret sketchy tandem skill drawings. Many hours in the gym and many hours in the

ocean and Kalani and Ala were ready to go to their first competition on Oahu, which they won. Armed with more confidence and more hours in the gym and water, they competed in Australia, taking second place. A competition in San Clemente, Calif., brought them another first place win! All of these top finishes put them in overall first place with points. Their last competition was to be in France, but the economy dashed the hopes for that trip, so they thought they might slip behind in points. However, the economy also worked FOR them since none of the outside-France teams could make the trip, so the French competition had to be downgraded, sealing the overall World Tandem Surfing Champion win for Kalani

and Ala, and making Ala the youngest ever to hold the title.

You might ask ... gymnastics and surfing? "After buying the only gymnastics school on a small island in the Hawaiian chain we wondered how the uniqueness of gymnastics could help the community. The answer is -- gymnastics is universal. We found ourselves helping a football player for fitness through plyometrics; a young female wrestler for joint strength; teaching kite surfers how to flip; and the challenges of tandem balancing while surfing and more. The knowledge of gymnastics has benefited us so much more than just teaching kids how to be upside down. We continue to grow within this beautiful sport," said Leonard.

So, Begin Here, Go Anywhere shows itself in true form. Gymnastics: *The sport that can take you anywhere!* ✪





Kalani Vierra (right) Ala Vierra achieved success in tandem surfing winning the title of the International Tandem Surfing Association 2008 World Champions. This is just another example of USA Gymnastics' slogan: Begin Here, Go Anywhere.

CLUB CORNER

Gymnastics Coach and Breast Cancer Survivor Teams Up with AJS Pancott Gymnastics to Create the Pink Invitational~Gymnasts Unite

Sue Weldon is a four-year breast cancer survivor who believes in the importance of empowering and bringing awareness about breast cancer to young women and girls.

As a gymnastics coach at AJS Pancott Gymnastics National Training Center in West Chester, Pa., Sue's job is to coach, train, inspire, and nurture the gymnasts. Now her vision of educating athletes in the gymnastics community about breast cancer and healthy lifestyle choices is finally coming to fruition.

Sue has partnered with AJS Pancott Gymnastics owners Steve and Louise Pancott to create the Pink Invitational~Gymnasts Unite. Proceeds from this three-day competition will benefit Living Beyond Breast Cancer, which works to empower women affected by breast cancer to live as long as possible with the best quality of life. The Pink Invitational will be held February

27-March 1, 2009, at the United Sports Training Facility in Downingtown, Pa. In addition to the gymnastics competition, the event will feature educational booths that focus on breast cancer prevention, healthy eating, organic products, environmental awareness, and how to talk with girls about the affects of the disease. At present, the Pink Invitational has registered more than 1,000 gymnasts from 25 teams representing six states.

Pancott Gymnastics National Training Center began in 1997 as an expansion of Pancott Gymnastics, one of the oldest gymnastics programs in the country. It has grown to be one of the largest competitive women's gymnastics programs in Pennsylvania.

The club offers competitive training and recreational gymnastics to athletes from ages 18 months to 18 years. AJS Pancott Gymnastics is owned and operated by Steve and Louise Pancott. ✧



L to R: Sue Weldon, Louise Pancott and Steve Pancott.

Enrollment Up!

Julia Thompson, owner of TAGS Gymnastics in Minnesota, said, "Our numbers at TAGS are really good, with more than 3,500 students. Our Fall II enrollment passed up the Fall I session. The Olympics and the Tour were very timely with this current economy."

Pictured is the Adshead family. They have eight children and seven take lessons at TAGS on Tuesdays. The mom home-schools the children. TAGS tuition discount works for families with multiple children. The first three pay and the next four take free lessons! ✧

