



Kids Stuff



Parkour makes the world their playground



Doug Ramsay photo

Little Ninjas' assistant coach Chad Pease gives Abby Berto, 4, a little help crossing the bars.

By **ANGELA COOPER-McCORKLE**

MONROE — Pop music is blasting in the airy white gym as children come shooting through the door and sprint like deer through the room.

Up, over, through, around, and across obstacles they leap. Instead of being in the way, the blocks, ramps and ropes are used to climb, pass and jump.

The kids are practicing Parkour, where using everything in one's path to move forward is the goal. It's a constant movement where you use your natural environment to your advantage.

At Sky Valley Academy, students take Parkour and "ninja warrior" classes that let them practice scaling walls, swinging from ledge to ledge and doing flips.

The quintuple steps are triangle shaped plywood wedges with rubber mats on one side to give shoes a good grip when kids "tic tac" to kick off the steps from one to the other.

"I'm brave, I'm strong, I'm smart," the kids chant as they rev up for their next spin around the gym.

The activity is more exercise than sport: the

athletes usually don't compete, and there aren't rules about how to play. It's a new pastime, too. It was developed in France in the 1980s, making it only as old as most of the parents in the class.

For their kids, it's perfect. "My son lives for jumping and climbing, and falling out of trees," jokes Shannon Wilson.

Her boys, Dominic, 10, and Calvin, 8, both love the classes. They move crablike as they climb from one step to another.

Shannon Wilson's brother trained for the "American Ninja Warrior" television show so she knew something about Parkour, plus the family already had a climbing wall in their basement.

"It's so crazy what they can do, I have to remind myself not to yell," Wilson said.

For kids who are a little shy, it's perfect too.

Four-year-old Abby's social anxiety slips away when she hits the gym, said mom Courtney Berto. "She's fearless," Berto said. Abby says everyone should try Parkour.

Abby takes a try at scaling an 8 foot "warped wall" and swinging from a "vine"

without a second thought.

It does wonders for confidence and self-esteem say parents.

The ninja and Parkour workouts also enhance speed, balance, hand-eye coordination and more, said coach Jessica Mirsky.

Many students favorite challenge is the "warped wall," a set of three 8- to 12-foot gently sloping walls that students learn to scale in a single bound. Little ones get a hand up from agile trainers until they master the technique.

"You run then explode, pulling yourself up" to the top of the wall says Dominic Wilson.

"It's awesome," says brother Calvin.

Brayden, age 8, says it's all about running up the wall with big steps and arms straight up to get a three-finger grip on the ledge.

Whatever the secret to scaling the wall, the children who do it say it makes them feel like Superman.

They take the skills with them after class, where park benches, trees, railings and steps are just a few places to practice.

With Parkour, the whole world is a playground.





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Holiday on the Bay

Come celebrate the holidays at the Port of Everett Marina Waterfront Center, 1205 Craftsman Way, on Saturday, Dec. 1.

- Events will include:
- Create a holiday craft (one per child)
 - Decorate holiday cookies (one per child)
 - Holiday face painting and washable tattoos

- Holiday music and movies
- Free cocoa, cider and popcorn
- City of Everett fire truck rides
- Tree Lighting and Santa visit (5 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.)
- Mukilteo Yacht Club Lighted Boat Parade (5:30 – 6 p.m.)
- 6th Annual Everett Farmers Market Holiday

Festival will feature more than 40 vendors and live music

• Toys for Tots Toy Drive to collect new, unwrapped gifts for children in need. 1-5 p.m.



Wintertide



Celebrate seasonal merriment at Wintertide! All are invited to this free family-friendly celebration on Thursday, Nov. 29, from 4 - 7 p.m. at the Everett Performing Arts Center. Enjoy arts and crafts, face painting, entertainment, cookies and cocoa by the bonfire, story time and more! A very special jolly old elf will also be stopping by for photos at

5:30 p.m. KIDSTAGE performances of Seussical KIDS at 4:45 and 6:30 p.m. Performances by: Everett HS Jazz Combo, Cavelero Mid-High Treble Choir, Kamiak HS Barber-shop Quartets, Lake Stevens HS Concert Choir, Snohomish Youth Choir. The center is at 2710 Wetmore Ave.

Date: Thursday, November 29, 2018
Time: 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Location: Everett Performing Arts Center, 2710 Wetmore Ave., between Everett Ave. and California Ave.

Santa arrives at 5:30 p.m.
KIDSTAGE

- Performances of Seussical KIDS at 4:45 & 6:30
- Arts & crafts & face painters
- Create memories in the holiday photo booth
- Take your own photo with Santa
- Free cocoa and cookies by the bonfire

