

## THE BUSINESS CORNER

Beth Feinstein-Bart

# Mad Science owner conjures up objectives

Dawn Whitney enjoyed her marketing director's job so much that when her company made one of its franchises available, she jumped at the chance to buy.

Today, Whitney is the owner of Mad Science of South Florida, a for-profit educational group that performs shows in Broward, Dade, Palm Beach and Monroe counties.

She took over the Hallandale-based operation on May 1. Before Whitney took charge, the office was run by the corporation's Montreal headquarters for 12 years.

The South Florida site is the largest territory in Mad Science's chain of 58 offices in the United States and Canada, said Whitney, who is the only single female franchise owner on the company's roster.

Whitney oversees 18 presenters, who are referred to as mad scientists. They go to schools, businesses, private birthday parties, camps, conventions, community centers and other places where children can be found, she said.

Whitney describes the shows as a cross between Bill Nye the Science Guy and magician David Copperfield, with a bit of the Simpsons tossed in for good measure.

"We give hands-on experiences that get children excited about science," Whitney said.

Presentations include bubbling potions, rocket launches, panning for gemstones and generators that create enough static electricity to make audience members' hair stand on end, she said. Whitney, herself, does one show a week.

Whitney found Mad Science two years ago while working as a program specialist for the Girl Scouts' Tropical Florida Council in Dade County.

"I used to hire them to come and give shows," she said. "I like what they did so much that I went to work for the company one year later."

By this time next year, Whitney

wants to make her office, at 2500 E. Hallandale Beach Blvd., the corporation's No. 1 franchise. She also wants to do more shows for nonprofit organizations.

For those who want to know more about Mad Science, the group has several upcoming public appearances, including a health and fitness expo June 14-16 at the Broward County Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale and a fund-raiser for foster care families at 6 p.m. on June 6 at Piper High School in Sunrise.

For more information call 457-4060 or 800-854-0304. The company also has its own Web site with interactive sections for children, parents and teachers at ([www.madscience.org](http://www.madscience.org)).