



Next Door Strangers

Few locals know about the world-class play environments devised right here in KC

STORY BY **DAYNE LOGAN**
PHOTO BY **SUSAN MCSPADEN**

Sometimes, Vicki Stoecklin says, she and her business partners feel like strangers in their own town. That's because Stoecklin is the education and child development director at **White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group**, a company that, among other things, designs children's learning and play environments all over the world—but rarely in KC. "Almost all of our projects are outside the greater Kansas City area," she says. Originally focused on repositioning ailing shopping centers, White Hutchinson eventually found a niche in the design of play facilities and decided to bring in Stoecklin, a former teacher with extensive education in early childhood development. Since taking the job Stoecklin has played a tremendous role in establishing White Hutchinson's reputation as the world's premier designer of learning and play environments. That reputation has put Stoecklin and her company in high demand both near—check out Lee's Summit's **Paradise Park** edutainment center—and far—like **LouLou Al Dugong's** edutainment center in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. According to Stoecklin, the diverse cultural nuances make every project a challenge. However, there is always one constant: "Play—it just transcends cultural barriers," she says. **KCB**

KC BUSINESS MAGAZINE is published monthly (12 issues) at 7101 College Blvd, Suite 400, Overland Park, KS 66210. 913-894-6923. All contents copyright ©2009 by Anthem Publishing Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction or use in whole or in part of the contents, without the prior written permission of the publisher, is prohibited. KC BUSINESS MAGAZINE is a trade name of Anthem Publishing Inc. All rights reserved. Annual subscription \$34.95. Postmaster: Send address changes to KC BUSINESS MAGAZINE, 7101 College Blvd, Suite 400, Overland Park, KS 66210. Unsolicited photographs, illustrations, or articles are submitted at the risk of the photographer/artist/author. Anthem Media assumes no liability for the return of unsolicited materials and may use them at its discretion.