



PHOTO BY GERALD WEAVER

Win LaForce & Ben Mathews Teen Entrepreneurs

I game store named after one of its two 17-year-old owners, I Win Games, is the only store of its kind on Hilton Head Island. Win LaForce and Ben Mathews, both seniors at Hilton Head High School, own their own business selling video games.

They are both taking a co-op class at the high school taught by Bill Rawl. In the class, they discuss taxes, health plans and other issues students will have to deal with in the business world. Class starts at 11 every school morning, and the students leave for their jobs at 11:40.

While most of the students go to work for someone else, these two young entrepreneurs decided they wanted to work for themselves and have fun at the same time.

LaForce and Mathews actually had a few students their own age job-shadow them recently.

"It's a hobby of both of ours," LaForce said about playing video games. "There wasn't a game store on the island." The two teenagers decided this was a niche that needed to be filled.

The store, which is located in the Courtyard Building across from Park Plaza, opened its doors August 27.

I Win sells new and used video games and game systems, including the popular Playstation, Microsoft Xbox, Nintendo Game Cube and Nintendo Game Bo systems.

Mathews said I Win is not a conventional business; they are very casual and laid back. Customers are welcome to trade in used games toward the purchase of newer ones. He said they encourage customers to come in and try out some of their 150 different used games. They have more than 500 games total in the store.

"Everything's going good," Mathews said. "We're a start-up business so you can expect some slow time, but for being a brand new business, I think we're doing awesome."

A resident of Hilton Head Island for the past seven years, Laforce plans to go to the University of South Carolina Beaufort next year to study business. His hobbies are sports and cars.

Born on Hilton Head, Mathews also plans to go to USCB to study business and possibly tourism.

- Amy Coyne Bredeson

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