

# Small Business Development Center at UCF Turf Athletics



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Lore Denny  
Turf Athletics

The familiar sound of a baseball bat hitting a ball is unmistakable. It was a familiar sound John Denny could not live without. A retired professional baseball player, Denny played on several teams throughout his career, most notably the Seattle Mariners. But, after the birth of his daughter, he wished for a quieter lifestyle that would include spending time with his family and watching his children grow. John’s wife, Lore, wished for the same and also wanted more stability for their family. She was growing tired of moving to a new place and new home at the turn of every baseball season. However, because baseball was such an integral part of John’s life, he did not want to stop doing what he loved. The Denny’s decided opening Turf Athletics was the perfect solution.

In February 2007, Lore Denny contacted the SBDC at UCF’s assistant director Pauline Davis to discuss the idea of opening a batting cage facility. Over the next few months, Pauline worked with Lore to develop her business plan and financing. With the business assistance Pauline provided, John and Lore Denny then started the process of selection a location. Once again, Lore contacted the SBDC and Pauline offered guidance to Lore, making sure the location had the proper zoning and licensing, as well as any other special requirements.

In June 2007, Turf Athletics, a professional-grade baseball and softball training facility located in Winter Garden, opened its doors. It was very important to John for the facility to be top-quality and authentic, Turf Athletics equals or exceed any professional facility nationwide. The facility offers four professional size batting cages that can accommodate professional players. In fact, it is not unusual to see professionals practicing at the facility. The facility also includes a multi-use indoor turf and outdoor training facility, as well as a pro shop. In addition to the equipment, Turf Athletics offers baseball and softball instruction, birthday parties, and camps. The facility caters to players of all ages; individuals can reserve a cage or an entire team can reserve several cages.

Now that the business has been open for almost two years, John and Lore are still excited about the opening of the business. Because nothing is routine, every day brings an exciting challenge – from watching students surpass their athletic goals, to scheduling teams, or planning the next event. The couple also quickly found their place in the company. Lore is responsible for the marketing and management of the company – making sure everything runs smoothly, while John sticks to what he loves – baseball.

On a typical afternoon the parking lot is buzzing with parents dropping off kids for individual lesson or a meeting place for the team. The wonderful thing about the facility is the comfort of practicing indoors, seven days a week no matter what the weather is outside. The Denny’s are grateful to the community for their support and the opportunity to realize their dreams. Lore appreciates the assistance from the SBDC and says, “It has taken quite a bit of effort to get the business to this point and Pauline has been there offering business advice and encouragement. She has talked me through a few panic situations.” Lore also state, “The most wonderful part of the business is that is a family business we get to watch our children grow while growing the business, it is definitely the best of both worlds and we are ecstatic.”

*Helping Businesses Start, Grow and Succeed*