

Pull on a reflective jersey, grab an orange laser tagger, slip on protective glasses and prepare to experience an adrenaline rush. Dodging left, then right, you stop, point and shoot. The light beam darts across the yard just as the orange laser tagger vibrates in the palm of your hand. Game over – you’ve been tagged.

Thanks to Eudene and Peter Rossi you too can be part of the laser tag action in the comfort of your backyard. The couple launched TagParty this year. Eudene, a native of Britain, and Peter, from Wales, learned of the game following their move to America eleven years ago.

“We had just gotten our first ten-pin bowling alley when we left Britain and I don’t remember having laser tag there,” said Eudene, 49, who describes herself as a sporty, outdoors type.

The couple believes the TagParty business is a perfect fit for Howard County.

“I was looking for something to do that gave me flexibility but could grow. I was always looking for something else to get back into the workforce after having the boys, and I thought this would be great,” said Eudene.

A Game For All Ages

When Eudene’s two sons received a laser tag gift set years ago, they were hooked. Matt, 17, and Alex, 15, both students at Centennial High School, quickly lured their parents to the game.

“Everyone likes it, not just children,” said Eudene, who admits that she fulfills her own laser tag fix from time to time.

Peter, 47, also partakes in the fun and explains that all one needs to participate is approximately a 100 by 100 square foot area.

The game, he says, appeals to anyone “8 to 99 ... as long as you can run around, there’s no upper age. It’s good fun; I enjoy watching them play.”

In fact, TagParty has become a popular choice for birthday parties, particularly among eight- to ten-year-old boys.

“Ten-year-old boys like to run,” chuckled Eudene, adding, “the girls like it too, though.”

The Rossi’s have developed a customer base in Ellicott City, Columbia, Frederick, and as far away as Baltimore and Gaithersburg.

“It’s mobile so we can pick it up and drive anywhere. Once we go above 30 miles we start charging more,” she said.

Make It Yours

Participants enjoy the ability to design their own game, with features such as choosing the duration of a game session, as well as a variety of game selections such as Capture the Flag, Water Tag, Zone, and Respond. In the summer months, a TagParty can end with a game of water tag. Players wear vests with scattered holes; when the openings fill up with water, the player is out.



(front, l-r): Joshua Kim, Danny Mooney, Colton Seigel, Connor Marcinek; back: Paul Watson, Daiki Watanabe, Willie Fu, Jakob Sunde, Ben Bloom and Jon Emmick.



Danny Mooney and Willie Fu.



Teams are limited to a maximum of eight players, with no more than 24 players competing at one time. A TagParty typically lasts two hours with allotted time for water and snack breaks.

Breath Of Fresh Air

The Rossis used to frequent Columbia's Shadowland with their two sons, a popular choice for many laser tag enthusiasts. However, the couple believes their approach to the game offers something different - an outdoor look at the fun of laser tag.

"It's not the same in the dark - they love being out in the fresh air running around. It's fun to be outside - get the kids away from the couch, television, and video games. We thought this was so neat and fun. It can get expensive and boring when you keep playing inside. I was amazed that nobody here had done this because other than Shadowland there's nowhere around here for laser tag," said Eudene.

Jakob Sunde, an Ellicott City resident, was one of the Rossis' first customers. Sunde celebrated his tenth birthday in April with a laser tag party with 12 friends from his Centennial Lane Elementary School class. Jakob's mother, Ellen, was pleased with the party.

"I didn't really have the room at my house so I had it at the Rossis'. We did laser tag there, then had cake and ice cream at our house. They even put pictures online so the parents can look at them. I think this will really take off," said Ellen.

Jakob believes the outdoor experience "is the best."

"I like being competitive and trying to beat each other. You don't have to wear heavy things but you have to have good eyesight, coordination, and be fast. I like it better than sports I play because there's no practice," said Jakob.

Tag parties can also be held at local parks where field space can be reserved. Company picnics are also using the game to build team and leadership skills.

Peter explained that "the demographics are ideal for this area ... ideally we'd like to do four a week so we can give individual attention. You can realistically do two parties a day, and weekends are the prime time."

In addition, the Rossis are searching for a way to better engage adults and teenagers.

"For the older kids and adults we're toying with the thought of a small electric shock on the arm to get that adrenaline rush and make it more like paintball. We're also looking at having college students help out in the summers as long as they have transportation to help set-up and run parties," said Peter.

No matter the place, Eudene believes she's found her niche.

"I like people, and it's something I'm good at. I've always been easygoing, that's just the way I am. I like being with the kids, and they're always well behaved because they really want to play so it's fun," she said.

For more information, call 410-750-2367, email Info@tagparty.net, or visit www.tagparty.net.