

Sign In | Register now

Home Delivery **The Boston Globe**

boston.com

Local Search Site Search
[input] GO

HOME TODAY'S GLOBE NEWS BUSINESS SPORTS LIFESTYLE A&E THINGS TO DO TRAVEL CARS JOBS REAL ESTATE LOCAL SEARCH

Movies Restaurants Music Theater/Art Television Books Celebrity news **Events** Games Comics Shop

HOME / A&E / CALENDAR

GLOBE SOUTH BEHIND THE SCENES

Kids put spin on Ooch's world



Brett Outchcunis, 32, who grew up in Wareham, has a knack for communicating with children.

By Robert Knox
Globe Correspondent / February 18, 2010

E-mail | Print | Reprints | Yahoo! Buzz | ShareThis Text size - +

Kid-magnet Brett Outchcunis, who began professional life as a yo-yo demonstrator, will bring his signature hand gestures, yo-yo dances, orange sneakers, and infectious personality to an interactive show billed as "a memory making experience" for children and their parents.

The show broadens the range of a children's performer who has been staging motivational school assembly programs in the New England area on themes such as "Positive Spin" for seven years, and recently debuted a show on bullying (the "Super-POWER Show") at a local elementary school.

Outchcunis, who goes by "Ooch," studied dance, worked for a yo-yo company for five years, and enlivens corporate events as a speaker. But his real gift is connecting with kids.

"Kids love him. They can't get enough of him," said Lynne Richardson, the Plymouth parent who called on Outchcunis's talents to juice up a volunteer summer program two years ago and has since become the promotional manager for the programs that make up "Ooch World."

"In front of kids, he's powerful. He gets them into his world," Richardson said.

The Boston Globe

ADVERTISEMENT



INSIDE BOSTON.COM

CHEAP EATS



Dining out tonight? Find cheap eats in the area

OVERLOOKED OLYMPIAN?



Skier Julia Mancuso is making quite a name for herself

HOUSE OF BLUES' DEBUT YEAR



Blues Brothers, Roger Daltrey, and more

NOTABLE DEATHS



CS4

Instantly find anything in your timeline with **Adobe After Effects' CS4**.

Green

Learn more >>

In "Ooch's Family Experience," he'll ask families to invent a family handshake - it's a bonding experience, he says.

He'll also ask kids to identify their parents' "superpower" - a question that often draws some silence. Your superpower is something you're good at, that helps you get through life and makes you feel super, Outchcunis says. "It makes you say, 'Wow, that's cool.'"

Outchcunis, 32, who grew up in Wareham and attended the University of Massachusetts Amherst, discovered his knack for communicating with children after being recruited by Yomega, a yo-yo manufacturer, to demonstrate new products during a revival of the yo-yo craze a dozen years ago. Working trade shows, he realized how much stronger his rapport with kids was, compared with other demonstrators.

"If I can connect with kids," he thought, "why sell them a product when I can give them something greater than that?"

He used his ability to create inspirational shows for children based on his own personality as a role model who has never smoked, drunk, or used drugs, but who is - demonstrably - "cool."

"There's no better person I can put in front of kids as a role model," Richardson said.

In school auditoriums, Outchcunis teaches and models ways to turn negative situations into positive ones through the concept he calls "spin it."

He begins with his own childhood story, the birth of his "Ooch" persona from a kid who got picked on for having of a long, unusual surname.

Other kids seized on Outchcunis (pronounced ooch-KOO-nis) and turned it into the highly uncool "Oochy-coochy." But young Brett made "Ooch" his own identity - a code word for an open, fun-loving personality. Being Ooch became shorthand for someone who was fun to be around. He took a negative and "spun" it into a positive.

He's still "Ooch" around children today. "Kids have always responded to me for some reason," he says. "I look young. I'm not intimidating. I've used that to our mutual advantage when I go to perform."

He begins shows with a trademark gesture. "We all 'Ooch' together," he says. Everybody raises fists over heads, says "ooo-ooch," - drawing out the long o's - then brings the hands down and shouts "Ooch!" Shared gestures build bonds, he says.

Being his own quirky self works particularly well with middle school students, who are just starting to struggle with issues of identity. There's no particular reason why Outchcunis wears orange shoes - except they're his. And after every show, middle schoolers come up to him and say, "I love your shoes, dude!"

Outchcunis say he takes advantage of his opportunities to do what he wanted school speakers to do when he was a kid. He makes himself accessible, learns names, stays after shows to talk, looks at people, gives everyone their own special moment.

And at a time when the state Legislature is weighing measures to crack down on bullying in schools, Outchcunis has drawn on his own experience and signature

[Remembering those who have passed away in 2010](#)

PLUS...

[Blogs](#) | [Crossword](#) | [Comics](#)
| [Horoscopes](#) | [Games](#) | [Lottery](#)
| [Caption contest](#) | [Today in history](#)

MOST E-MAILED

1. [Fish roasted on a bed of tomatoes and potatoes](#)
2. [What does saturated fat cause? Arguments.](#)
3. [Cheap eats in the area](#)
4. [Patriots mourn passing of Mosi Tatupu](#)
5. [Cold comfort for Northeastern](#)
6. [Plan to fire teachers roils RI's poorest city](#)
7. [Wyo. legislators seek 'cowboy ethics' code](#)

RECOMMENDED SEARCHES

- [Sacred whale](#)
- [Sen. Scott Brown](#)
- [TRAVEL Winter getaways](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Horoscope](#)
- [Crossword puzzle](#)

[ABOUT THIS LIST](#)

concepts like power and spin to create a show on bullying.

Based on talks with mental health professionals, the “Super-POWER Show” is a 60-minute performance for elementary school children that discusses bullying, how to respond to it, and how bystanders can recognize their role in stopping it. The show also emphasizes the importance of reporting bullying incidents right after they happen.

After he gave the show at South Elementary School in Plymouth, students started opening up on the subject, Outchcunis said.

Robert Knox can be reached at rc.knox2@gmail.com. ■

© Copyright 2010 Globe Newspaper Company.

Start your week off right with in-depth coverage. [Subscribe now to the Globe.](#)



READER COMMENTS »

[View reader comments \(0\) »](#) [Comment on this story »](#)

Ads by Google

[what's this?](#)

Children's Bulletins

These Children's Worship Bulletins Are Customizable and Reproducible!
www.ChildrensBulletins.com

Stride Rite-Official Site

Shop Full Collection of Kids Shoes. Clearance styles up to 50% off!
www.StrideRite.com

Find Local Tutoring

Find Tutoring for Your Child. Search Local Listings Today.
www.Care.com/Tutoring



Visit ICA Boston
Award-winning waterfront
museum

[Home](#) | [Today's Globe](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [A&E](#) | [Things to Do](#) | [Travel](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Local Search](#)

[CONTACT BOSTON.COM](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work here](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS feeds](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Make Boston.com your homepage](#)
[CONTACT THE BOSTON GLOBE](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#) | [Advertise](#) | [The Boston Globe Extras](#) | [The Boston Globe Store](#) | © 2010 NY Times Co.