

Business INSIDER

"We will do whatever it takes."

DIETER ZETSCHKE, *DaimlerChrysler chairman, on efforts to generate a return on sales of 7 percent at the company's struggling Mercedes-Benz unit by 2007. Mercedes posted a rare loss of \$598 million last year.*



Trainer's cash bulks up math program

A New Baltimore resident who created a mathematical equivalent of the grammar sensation "Hooked on Phonics" won \$200,000 from a celebrity bodybuilder to start her own business.

Jennifer Tuttle, who teaches first and second grade at Atwood Elementary in Macomb Township, was selected from more than 11,000 aspiring entrepreneurs who entered a contest run by fitness icon Jake Steinfeld of "Body by Jake" fame. Tuttle's business idea, Multiplication Madness, is a DVD that uses chanting, singing and visual number patterns to teach math.

She won \$200,000 in seed money from Steinfeld, a \$50,000 Marquis Jet card good for 10 hours of luxurious flying time and a five-day trip to an executive training seminar.

"I'm extremely excited," said Tuttle, who has been on a leave of absence from her teaching job. "I'm hoping this will be a good avenue to launch my company. I had the ambition to do this, but I needed funding, and winning this has really lit a fire under me to get the job done."

The contest was connected to Steinfeld's first business-oriented book, "I've Seen a Lot of Famous People Naked and They've Got Nothing on You," which his Web site calls an entrepreneurial "pure-Jake motivational kick in the 'buttissimo.'"

Tuttle, a 30-year-old mother of two, submitted a short essay about her idea and herself that earned her a spot as one of 10 semifinalists in January. She was flown to New York last week and selected as the winner. Tuttle's invention, which includes a book, CD, DVD and workbook for parents and teachers, will be available in the fall.

This is the boss speaking

It's not every day that top-level corporate executives return Business Insider's calls. That's usually the job of media flaks or corporate spokespeople. And when they do, they're usually accompanied by layers of public rela-



Gary Gershoff / WireImage.com

Jennifer Tuttle is \$200,000 richer, thanks to the generosity of fitness icon Jake Steinfeld.

tions staff.

So imagine our surprise when Jeff Brotman, chairman of Issaquah, Wash.-based Costco Wholesale Corp., returned a voicemail message Business Insider left for the company's investor relations staff about withdrawing plans for a store in Scio Township.

We'd heard on Dateline NBC that Brotman is known to field his own calls, but we didn't actually believe it — until he returned ours. "We handle our own calls," said Brotman after a reporter mistakenly thought he was a corporate spokesman.

Now if we could only get other corporate honchos to follow suit.

Happy V-Day, GM

Whether it was a happy coincidence or smart planning, General Motors Corp. was

shown the love in a big way when it announced new investments for five Michigan factories on Valentine's Day. Government officials praised GM for sinking \$545 million into the plants. Employees cheered. Executives pledged the automaker was on the comeback. And for a moment, GM's \$8.6 billion loss in 2005 faded away. In an event filled with light-hearted jokes, Gov. Granholm weighed in with a comment that took a few observers by surprise. She said the U.S. auto industry will continue to be strong in part "because new car owners are being born every 12 seconds." Then, remembering it was Feb. 14, she added: "In fact, some of them are probably being created right now." GM hopes they grow up fast and buy Chevys.

Contributing: Nick Bunkley, Tenisha Mercer and Brett Clanton.