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Local arcade competes in 'Save the Arcade' campaign

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By JOHN BACHMANN

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For almost 25 years, people of all ages have been playing their favorite games for just a quarter at Star Worlds Arcade, 1234 E. Lincoln Highway.

Whether it's destroying viruses with vitamins in Dr. Mario or fighting off Mr. Hot Dog as Peter Pepper in BurgerTime, there are several games to delight fans of nostalgic video games.



Jake Betterton | Northern Star

Store front of Star Worlds Video Arcade, 1234 E. Lincoln Highway. The arcade is currently competing against three other in the U.S. in the Stride Gum's

Owner Patrick O'Malley sees his arcade as not only a place to play games, but also as a place to hang out with friends.

"It's become a more social environment with friends, just like how it was back in the 80s," he said.

One thing O'Malley likes about his place is that it is mostly made up of older games from days when Atari and Nintendo reigned supreme.

O'Malley was able to take something he enjoyed growing up and make a career out of it.

"I was addicted to arcade games as a kid, and worked them into my everyday life," he said. Star Worlds Arcade has recently found itself competing with other arcades in Stride Gum's "Save the Arcade" campaign. The campaign features four arcades from throughout the U.S. that Stride felt were above the rest.

Star Worlds is the smallest arcade and from the smallest town, competing with the other arcades hailing from Nashville, Austin and the San Francisco area.

In the contest, video game enthusiasts can participate by going online to savethearcades.com and playing contest game Zapataur. The participants then take the points they received after playing the game and send their points to the arcade they are trying to support. Whichever arcade has the most points receives \$25,000 from Stride to use toward their establishment.

Star Worlds is in third place with over 56 million points.

O'Malley sees the contest not as a way to save his arcade, which he said is doing fine, but he sees it as an opportunity to upgrade it and make some additions.