

## APPLYING HERSELF



NEWS TIMES, DANBURY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Stephanie Klein Wassink, a Redding mother of four, who developed a consulting firm called **Winning Applications**, a service that helps students with the college application process, is franchising her business model.

# Winning Applications branches out

By Susan Tuz  
STAFF WRITER

REDDING — Stephanie Klein Wassink has taken her experience on the admissions committee at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management and developed a consulting firm of her own.

Called **Winning Applications**, the service helps students prepare applications and essays that give them the edge in getting into top schools. Now Klein Wassink, a Redding mother of four, is branching out and franchising the business model. By July she will be in full swing, starting a college consulting panel of franchisees with college savvy and writing skills.

"Colleges are looking for kids who stand out," said Klein Wassink, a Brown University graduate. "What I've done is identify aspects that not only help them stand out but help them move more easily through the application process."

Klein Wassink has helped high school juniors and seniors with the college application process for five years. The existence of her business spread quickly by word of mouth.

"Parents are very proud of their chil-

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dren and the colleges they go to," Klein Wassink said. "So as my customers get into their colleges of choice, parents recommend me to their friends."

A number of years ago, Klein Wassink ended her career on Wall Street to be a stay-at-home mom. Her husband suggested she use her writing, business and admissions experience to start her home-based business.

Gus Hampilos, of Ridgefield, has used Klein Wassink's service for his daughters—Katherine, now at Oberlin College, and Elise, a senior at Wooster School in Danbury who will be attending Gettysburg College in the fall.

"Katherine was considering transferring to Oberlin and needed help," Hampilos said. "Stephanie was so exceptional in the help she provided Katherine, we turned to her again when Elise was applying for college."

Hampilos said Klein Wassink's strength is guiding students through the college application process. The students make all the decisions and

are "in charge." But Wassink reminds them when each step in the application process has to be done. When they write their essays, she has proofreaders go over them and then reads them herself, making suggestions or improvements.

**Winning Applications** was experiencing such strong market demand that Klein Wassink decided to expand and franchise. Would-be franchisees should have strong writing, marketing, organizational and people skills, Klein Wassink said.

She worked with an outside consultant to develop a detailed training program. She also has specialists who will coach franchisees on topics related to college admissions.

"There is a huge pipeline of kids who want help with a college application process that has changed dramatically since their parents applied," she said. "I am structuring the franchise as an admissions committee so I will always be in the background providing support."

— For more information on **Winning Applications**, visit [winningapplications.net](http://winningapplications.net) or call 938-2878.

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