

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT

'Drill Sergeant' helps change life styles

Melissa Grattan of Clifton Park is bringing her newest endeavor to the area: Boot Camp Challenge — a nationally licensed fitness program.

As a personal trainer for several years, Grattan would work with clients one-on-one in-home along with maintaining a regular schedule of small group classes at Clifton Common.

Then just last year, Grattan learned about this new program through an ad in a fitness magazine.

Intrigued, she contacted the owner, Lori Patterson of St. Louis.

"I knew we didn't have anything like this here so I called. After speaking with Lori, I knew this would fit perfectly into my business as it was geared towards the independent personal trainer. Lori was looking for driven self-starters," Grattan says.

Patterson herself flew here and spent a weekend with Grattan. By the following week, Grattan was her first licensee and an official "Drill Sergeant."

Grattan was presented with the business model and educated in all practical elements including sample workouts. Defined as a unique results-driven packaged program, Boot Camp Challenge encompasses assessments, nutrition and the work out and is designed to be taught military style learned from Patterson's experience in the US Army.

With just seven in her first class, Grattan currently has two classes with 30 participants each.

And, with a demand she cannot keep up with, she has just hired five more Drill Sergeants who will launch their own sites including locations at Malta Health and Fitness, College of St. Rose and

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Excel 180 in Albany. She has hand-picked her trainers knowing they would fit easily into the program.

"They all have something to bring to the table," she said.

With the packaged program, classes are staggered three days a week. The first two days of each session start with assessments, nutrition guidance and testing.

Testing includes a body fat measurement, a timed one mile walk/run, push up test and sit up test.

All numbers are logged and kept on file. These same tests are then performed the last day of class, six weeks later, to track a participant's overall progress. There is no weigh in.

A great deal of time during the first two days is spent on nutrition. Grattan is there to make comments and suggestions; all her information is based on the American Dietary Association's guidelines.

Each trainee will also begin a food journal that is collected sporadically throughout the session by Grattan.

"The food journal is huge. People just don't realize what they eat," Grattan said. On

Day 3 the workouts begin — boot camp style, of course. The tried and true military basics of jumping jacks, run/walk, jumping rope and weight training all constitute the initial menu of activity.

All subsequent classes, Grattan promises, are always new and different to negate boredom and combined encompass total body conditioning with the goal of building cardiovascular and muscle strength endurance and flexibility.

Grattan's classes consist of both men and women with a median age of 37.

Her trainees range in age from 16 to 61 so no one should be deterred from thinking this isn't for them. Grattan said people travel from Queensbury to Voorhesville to be drilled at Boot Camp Challenge in Clifton Park and, much like in the Army, the group becomes very cohesive. The team dynamic creates a family environment and keeps everyone accountable and there for each other.

Rather than focus on weight loss, Grattan said that the average participant will see a five percent loss in body fat during the first session and a

runner can shave two minutes off his mile.

With a return rate of 80 percent, Grattan is gratified knowing she made the right decision signing on for Boot Camp Challenge which now has 23 licensees from Florida to Montana.

Patterson isn't surprised. After running her Boot Camp Challenge for six years in the midwest, the demand for her expertise continued to increase over time with speaking engagements and demonstrations.

Finally she decided to write up a business plan and trademark and license it. It is designed so that each Drill Sergeant she hires can use it advantageously based on their own needs and financial situation.

"The package is a way for fitness professionals to decide their own financial income. And Melissa has the passion, motivation and intelligence to take this to the next level. She's just top notch - the consummate professional," Patterson said.

For those considering it, Grattan describes Boot Camp Challenge as an addiction.

"It focuses on how a person is feeling, how their clothes are fitting; it's a healthy program, not a weight-loss program," Grattan said. "I want them to see it as a life style change and for them to develop habits that will carry them through a lifetime. This is the coolest most rewarding thing I have ever done. It is life changing, it really is."

Members of The Chamber of Southern Saratoga County are profiled each week by Lauren Carpenter. To be included contact the chamber at 371-7748 or loretta@southern-saratoga.org

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