Co-founders Adam and Dedra Leapley were inspired to create a specialized gym for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) based on their own experience of raising a child with ASD. Adam, believing in an overall healthy mind and body, introduced his son to personal training. This led to improvements in his son’s level of fitness and social/emotional well being. Adam also recognized his son’s talent for mentoring others on the spectrum through his work with “Unified Sports”, the “Best Buddies” program and the “Autism Spectrum Resource Center”. Adam thought that a specialized gym would give his son the opportunity to translate his strength for working with others into a career. After floating the idea to professionals in the field of ASD, he found there was a great enthusiasm for this concept and decided to move forward.

Classes

At ASD Fitness Center, we offer a range of different classes to suit every member's needs.

YOGA
Yoga includes breathing control, meditation and the adoption of specific bodily postures. This class helps create a relaxing environment all while reducing pain, aggression and obsessive & self-stimulatory behaviors. It also helps create more control in regulating anxiety and emotions.

CARDIO BOOT CAMP
An adaptive interval class that mixes calisthenics and body weight exercises with cardio training. These boot camps are designed in a way to be constantly changing. You will definitely sweat and work hard in these classes!

KARATE
For our karate class, our members increase their confidence and focus in a safe and structured environment. They also build social skills among peers while working
ASD Fitness Center Media Kit | 2016

towards a common goal, improve balance, flexibility, attention span, coordination and overall physical fitness.

ZUMBA
A total workout, combining all elements of fitness – cardio, muscle conditioning, balance and flexibility, boosted energy and a serious dose of fun each time you come to class!

STRENGTH & TRAINING CLASS
Our strength and training class is one of our more challenging classes. This class helps improve muscular strength by increasing the ability to resist force through the use of Free weights, machines and/or the person’s own body weight. Strength training is designed to increase greater resistance, which in turn stimulates the development of muscle strength.

*Member must be at least 10 years old, and be able to work independently.

TEAM BUILDING ($150.00 FOR 6 WEEKS)
Self-stimulatory behaviors are rooted in the core of Autism; every individual experiences difficulty within his/her ability to communicate, express, learn and interact with others and their environment. Therapeutic Recreation implements those self-stimulatory behaviors into hands on activities that enable each child participating to use a previous barrier as a tool to strengthen their overall social abilities. This means that when an individual is able to include his/her ‘self-stimulatory behaviors’ into every day behaviors and interactions, their ability to be social and communicate within their environment will not only improve but will be manageable; furthering an increase in their well-being and functioning.

Teambuilding is defined as, “a collective term for various types of activities used to enhance social relations and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks”. We focus on social interactions, communication tools, facial expressions and conversational techniques. We accomplish this by creating hands on activities and interactive games. Each week attention will be drawn to one aspect of teambuilding, social skills, or communication tools, through purposeful challenges, movement-based activities and physical fitness. Teambuilding Class strives to create safe space where
each individual participating can feel comfortable in being themselves; further opening the doors to individual growth.

**The Benefits of Physical Activity in those with ASD**

Physical fitness does wonders for our body and mind. But what does physical activity do for those on the Autism spectrum? A meta-analysis (analysis of existing research) was conducted and published in 2012 by Michelle Sowa and Ruud Meulenbroek from Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour at Radboud University Nijmegen in The Netherlands. They identified 16 studies that assessed the impact of physical exercise on children and adults with autism (total of 133 participants across studies). The authors analyzed the studies and found a significant impact on motor and social skills across studies. The studies included physical activity interventions of walking, running, swimming, horseback riding, bike riding, and strength training.

Like that of normal gym, ASD Fitness Center features personal one-on-one training, intimate group classes and work out machines such as treadmills. An Individualized Education Program (IFP) is developed after a sit down evaluation with the potential member. This evaluation helps tailor the work out plan to suit the member’s needs. The benefits from physical exercise show in our clients, from dropping several pant sizes to feeling more comfortable in social situations. Our clients continue to progress with each session and we are glad to follow them on this journey.

**Testimonials**

“Since our son has been going to ASD Fitness center, he has built up his muscle tone and his confidence. We are so glad we found this wonderful place.”

*Mary & Mike Kenney – Parents of ASD Fitness Center client*

“When Evan first started coming, he would say to me in the car afterwards, “Every time I go, I feel really happy after. I leave feeling all sweaty and energized.””

*Parent of ASD Fitness Center client*

“ASD Fitness isn’t just a gym, it’s our new family and they go above and beyond to create activities catered to my son that he otherwise would never get to experience.”
I’m truly grateful for their innovative vision to make our amazing children be part of a community that embraces how awesome they are!”

_Tori-Anne Dauri – Parent of ASD Fitness Center client_

“Hannah and Sam Potter both go to ASD Fitness Center once a week and we can’t say enough about the environment or the staff. We always feel welcomed and comfortable, and both kids are learning things that can be used and applied at home. Hannah LOVES her yoga class, and Sam is excited to work with Jason or Jaymie on listening and endurance while they play football, climb, or use hockey equipment – which Mr. Jason ordered immediately upon finding out that Sam is interested in that sport! Miss Chris always keeps us updated with news and event information and answers any questions we have. Now THAT is what I would call dedication. We will be with the ASD center for a long time to come.”

_Angie Potter – Parent of ASD Fitness Center client_

“We would like to thank from the heart the ASD center for all you do for our children, We our truly blessed to have you in our lives …”

_Gia Hamadeh – Parent of ASD Fitness Center client_

“It is very apparent that an enormous amount of planning and thought went into the creation and development of the ASD Fitness Center. The facility is spacious, calming, and inviting, and the staff and trainers are all very friendly, skilled professionals with backgrounds in special education. It is wonderful to have this awesome specialized gym in the Town of Orange.”

_Linda Ball – Parent of ASD Fitness Center client_
Press Release

[ASD Fitness Center]
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 04/14/16

ASD Fitness Center: First of its Kind in the Nation

Orange, CT: As of 2014, 1 in 68 children have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The ASD Fitness Center has created a new approach to help those on the spectrum that has yet to be discovered to our knowledge. Our fitness center is a very unique gym designed specifically to serve individuals who are on the Autism Spectrum. All of our personal trainers have a special education background as well as being certified personal trainers. We offer one-on-one personal training; group training classes, yoga, dance and karate. Today, we have more than 80+ families who attend our gym and we are close to full capacity! Our mission at the gym is to provide a safe, comfortable environment for those with ASD and to help improve their level of physical fitness while also enhancing both behavior and mood.

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Past Press

Connecticut Post


New Haven Register


WTNH 8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJOJ7ZK3VZo

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