

Fitness studio geared towards kids opens in Mount Pleasant

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Beach Cowboy Fitness offers inclusive gym classes for homeschooled, challenged and neurodivergent children at its Mount Pleasant location on Queensborough Boulevard.

Owners Cynthia and Cameron Lett, a mother-son duo, started Beach Cowboy Fitness to improve a societal issue: the degradation of communication and interpersonal skills in today's youth.

"We're trying to turn that around through fitness and fun," said Cynthia.

Nearly 22% of schools have no physical education programs at all and only 4% of elementary schools have daily gym classes, according to social scientist Claire Nader. Meanwhile physical education is the only class known to improve physical, mental and emotional health, as well as executive function. Students who participate in gym class are more likely to see improvement in math and reading, thanks to a higher level of effective executive function.

Despite the proven, important role exercise plays in cognitive development and social skills, gym classes are one of the first things to be cut as schools tighten their budgets.

This is precisely what Cynthia and Cameron Lett hope to counter. Their fitness classes teach children the fundamentals of exercising, including how to warm up and cool down, but their larger focus is creating a sense of camaraderie. Students participate in a combination of games that are competitive, with an urgency to work together in teams to achieve a common goal.

All the games and classes at Beach Cowboy Fitness are inclusive and adaptive to students with physical or intellectual challenges.

“We make adjustments so everyone can participate, and they don’t feel left out or unable to achieve,” said Cynthia.

They also encourage children of all levels and abilities to work together.

“Neurotypical students are going to learn how to work with students who have challenges — they’ll learn empathy, accommodation, and practice kindness. They’re all going to have the same competitive opportunities,” Cynthia added.

Gym classes at Beach Cowboy Fitness focus on winning and losing graciously. Negativity, name calling and bullying are not tolerated.

Instead, students will learn how to celebrate the opposing team’s wins and encourage them after their losses. The goal is for students to understand that just because their team lost, it doesn’t mean they’re losers.

“We think it’s important that reality is very much a part of the curriculum,” said Cynthia.

Beach Cowboy Fitness follows the South Carolina Department of Physical Education Program, so students can earn academic credit after completing two semesters, with a minimum of two classes per week for 18 weeks in a semester. Programs for homeschooled children can be purchased by the semester. Each class is based on the grades the children are in with forms and assessments

completed by their coaches after each class. Financing options are available for semester purchases.

All classes are limited to ten children with two certified coaches: Cameron Lett and Eliza Athans. During special needs classes, family members and friends of the student are welcome to purchase a membership and participate with them.

Beach Cowboy Fitness is located at 1200 Queensborough Blvd., Suite B, in Mount Pleasant. To learn more, visit their website at beachcowboyfitness.com or call (843) 438-4833.