

BUSINESS

MAKING AN IMPACT

Young business thrives and produces successful athletes

By **Suzi Prokell**
Special to The Community News

Three years ago when a young business woman was looking for a place to set up shop, the only thing she knew was that it had to be in Aledo. Recognizing the growth of our community, Sydnie Evans knew what she offered was something Parker County would support.

While on a full cheerleading scholarship from Weatherford College, Evans started coaching gymnastics and power tumbling on the side for fun. She enjoyed coaching so much that she changed her major and set a goal to open her own gym. In 2013, Evans earned a degree in interdisciplinary business from Tarleton State University and opened Impact Athletic Training Center in a 10,000 square foot warehouse facility near downtown Aledo.

Within one year, Impact had made quite an impact, growing from fewer than 20 athletes to more than 150, and expanding programming to include power tumbling and cheerleading. Realizing that they were at capacity, Evans started looking for a new location.

"We were running out of training space and knew we had to do something or our athletes would not receive the best training possible," Evans said. "We didn't know where we were going to move, but one thing we did know. We wanted to stay in Aledo."

Impact moved to its current location, 100 Nu Energy Drive in Aledo, in November 2014. Since moving, Impact has grown to more than 350 athletes and now also offers dance classes, summer camps, parties, lock-ins, parents' night out events, and more. This fall, Impact will launch an after-school program providing

Aledo students transportation from school to the gym to participate in supervised activities and recreational classes.

"We had a dream and this community helped make it come true," said Evans. "Our explosive growth has all been due to the support of this community."

Evans believes in making an "impact" on our local community and has held many fundraisers and events benefiting organizations such as The Aledo Children's AdvoCats, The Center of Hope, and The City of Aledo's Veterans Plaza.

"We believe in working hard and giving back and it is paying off. Not only are our athletes excelling in their sports, but they see us giving back to the community and want to do the same," Evans said. Impact's athletes have collected soccer balls in memory of Zeb Montgomery, canned goods for The Center of Hope, held a flip-a-thon to raise funds for burn victim Cameron Hudson, and participated in awareness events for World Down Syndrome Day.

But the primary focus at Impact is producing successful athletes. Six months after opening was a turning point for Impact. In 2014, level 3 Karly Laughley and level 6 Aubrey Miller, both of Aledo, made America's Top 100 list for floor exercise. The accomplishment set Impact apart from other gyms in the area and drew new athletes to the program. In 2015, four Impact gymnasts were placed on America's Top 100: Kalee Mays, Karly Laughley and Maryn Ward, all from Aledo, and Mikayla Butler of Fort Worth. Laughley made the list again in 2016, her third year in a row to make the list.

During the 2015 season, Impact had five levels 7-8 gymnasts qualify for the regional championships where they competed against the best gymnasts from seven states. Impact's Abby Dodson of Fort Worth was the level 7 regional all-around

champion and gold medalist on floor and vault. She also received a silver medal on beam while Aledo's Leah Rogers received silver on floor. Also in 2015, level 1 Katelyn McCarry of Azle received a perfect score of 10.0, something very few gymnasts achieve, on bars at the Carol Hillenburg State Invitational. She went on to receive gold medals on every event and first all-around at the 2016 Magical Classic in Orlando.

Level 8 gymnasts Brooklynn Clapp of Brock and Makayla Cousins of Weatherford qualified to compete at the 2016 regional championships where Cousins placed 2nd on floor, 2nd on beam, 3rd on bars, and 3rd all-around.

"We are super proud of our athletes. We are very committed to how we train, but we also know how to have fun. All of our coaches have close bonds with our athletes and I think those relationships are why these kids are succeeding," said Evans.

Impact's power tumbling and cheerleading teams have also been successful. Impact's level 1 cheer team placed 1st and level 2 team placed 2nd at their very first competition. Level 2 also received Best Jumps at the Dallas Cowboys Championships Nationals and 2nd place at Cheer Power Nationals.

Additionally, Impact had three state champion power tumblers in 2015 (Miranda Saenz, Brenna Saenz, and Karter Kelley, all of Weatherford), and every member of the power tumbling team advanced to the 2015 national championships. In 2016, Landon Lee of Weatherford is state champion in trampoline, tumbling, and double mini. Lee, Kelley, Mackenzie Sanders, Hannah Kemp, and Alyssa Fisher have also qualified to advance to the 2016 U.S. Championships.

Impact will celebrate its third anniversary in May with a free community parade and fundraiser from



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Breanne Wytcherley coaches Ramona Wills on parallel bars.

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 28. All funds raised will benefit the new Aledo Veterans Plaza.

For more information, call 817-899-6681 or visit www.impactathletic.net.

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