

LIFESTYLE NEWS

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Class a perfect FIT for mother and child

Local mom brings mother and baby fitness class to Hamilton area

BY KRISTIA SMITH
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Marta Pegan tried to work out at a gym following the birth of her first child just over a year ago, but she was constantly being paged by babysitting every time her daughter fussed.

So when she heard about FITMOM classes being held in her area, she was immediately interested.

"I am a dietitian and while on maternity leave I wanted to get back into shape," said Ms. Pegan. "I thought I was in pretty good shape, but my first workout absolutely killed me."

"By the end of the 12 weeks, I was in the best shape ever and my daughter was loving it."

FITMOM was founded in 2000 by Toronto mother and competitive gymnast Andrea Page. As a certified personal trainer, an experienced doula with a great deal of training in childbirth education and as a mother herself, Ms. Page knows too well the challenges faced by mothers who want to "get back in shape."

When Ms. Pegan and her husband made the move from Toronto to Hamilton, they began to search for FITMOM classes, but quickly found out they didn't exist in this area.

"I was immediately interested in starting the business here," Ms. Pegan said. "I got myself certified in pre and postnatal fitness, CPR and first aid and I absolutely love this."

Currently, Ms. Pegan offers FITMOM classes in Hamilton at Chedoke Presbyterian Church and in Burlington at Tansley Woods.

She hopes to add West Hamilton and Dundas classes by the spring. She also looks forward to the warmer weather when she will kick-off her stroller fitness classes.

Prenatal classes help pregnant women achieve and maintain a healthy physical state throughout their pregnancy.

FITMOM Canada states that researchers have found exercising moms have healthier placentas, which means more oxygen and nutrients for the baby and that exercise during pregnancy has been shown to have a positive effect on a woman's blood pressure.

Postnatal classes allow new mothers to bring their children along for the workout. Babies participate while in either a front or back carrier. The progressive resistance provided by the baby is a bonus, requiring muscles to work that much harder.

Ms. Pegan said about half of this class is conducted while carrying the baby, while the second half is dedicated to 'interactive' floor work and stretching. Baby activities are also incorporated in the workout.

Having her own child in her exercise class with her has made a real difference to both Ms. Pegan and her 14-month-old daughter Thora.

"She loves music now," said Ms. Pegan. "And I hope that by her watching me exercise, it will become a normal part of her life, just as taking a bath or brushing her teeth are."

Keri Copcutt and her daughter Bryn are new to FITMOM class. But after one class, Ms. Copcutt loved the challenge it provided.

"When (Bryn) was in the backpack, I could feel it immediately," she said. "But I know I'll get stronger."

Ms. Copcutt said she doesn't exercise at home because there is always something else to do that keeps her from finishing her workout.

"You get distracted so easily," she added. "There's always laundry or something else to do."

Prenatal FITMOM classes are held at Chedoke Presbyterian Church on Mohawk Road Mondays at 6:30 p.m. The postnatal classes are held in the same location Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:15 a.m.

Tansley Woods holds postnatal classes Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. and prenatal classes Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. If interested, you can reach Marta at FITMOM by calling (905) 575-1551.

Marta Pegan, with daughter Thora on back, shows the class how to do a proper lunge.
PHOTO BY KRISTIA SMITH



Program credited for son's progress