

## Boot Camp a hit for Moms

### Popular program expanding to Sparta

By **LYNDSEY CAYETANA BOUCHAL**  
lbouchal@njherald.com

FREDON — Sprints, squat thrusts, crunches. Planks, push-ups, dips. And that's just the last 10 minutes of class. By the end of the one-hour, high-energy fitness session, the women gather in a circle to stretch their bodies and lower their pulsing heart rates. Their children, close by, retreat from mimicking their mommies' exercises and begin to roll medicine balls across the gymnasium floor.

Welcome to Boot Camp for Moms, a six-week fitness program designed to better moms' overall health and fitness while providing affordable on-site child care.

Due to increased enrollment, Boot Camp for Moms founder and personal trainer Jessica Sampieri-Griffin said, the all-women's fitness program will be expanding to Station Park in Sparta and Rock Spring Park in Long Valley. The thrice weekly morning boot camp, which was originally taught at Lodestar Park in Fredon, will now include evening classes in Sparta and Fredon. In addition, three certified personal trainers will join the instructing roster.

The expansion will begin next month with the commencement of Sampieri-Griffin's sixth boot camp, from May 2 to June 10.

Sampieri-Griffin said the expansion was a natural and necessary progression "because it's a personal training class" which requires "the ability to work with people one-on-one". When her classes began toppling over 20 people each, she divided the boot camp into two morning programs, one at 9 a.m. and one at 10 during the winter months when the class was held indoors at the Fredon Township Civic Center.

"It's not your ordinary routine group exercise class," Sampieri-Griffin said. "It's more like personal training in a group setting."

Ceri McGovern, 49, of Long Valley, agreed. Despite its intense title, the boot camp is meant for every fitness level. McGovern, a first-time camper, said the classes are personalized and Sampieri-Griffin always offers three modified versions of an exercise to best suit each woman's needs.

"She also comes around and corrects (your form) so that you don't injure yourself and you get the full benefits

To join Boot Camp for Moms or an NJ Fit Mom small group or one-on-one training class, visit [njfit-mom.com](http://njfit-mom.com), or contact Jessica Sampieri-Griffin at 973-229-57788 or [njfit-mom@yahoo.com](mailto:njfit-mom@yahoo.com).



A group of women and their children hold the plank position as they conclude their workout at Boot Camp for Moms at the Fredon Township Civic Center. Boot Camp for Moms is a personal training program designed specifically for women's health and fitness.



Anna Tillinghast, 33, of Hardwick, right, and her 4-year-old daughter, Clover, left, hold the plank position while exercising at Boot Camp for Moms at the Fredon Township Civic Center.



From left, Jessica Quinn, of Washington Township, Pa., Elliot Tillinghast, his mother, Anna, of Hardwick, and sister, Clover, do a set of crunches as part of their workout at Boot Camp for Moms.

of what you're doing," McGovern said.

Sampieri-Griffin said once she realized that mothers were traveling from all parts of the county and beyond, like McGovern, she decided it was time to expand to Sparta and Long Valley in Warren County.

Furthermore, Sampieri-Griffin now offers unlimited boot camp classes for \$160 per six-week session, whereas there was a \$125 12-class limit in the past. Women can also go to any of the three sites that offer the camps for no additional fee. Child care rates vary depending on the number of classes registered for.

"For me, (boot camp) is my personal time," said Jessica Quinn, 26, of Washington Township, Pa. "It's my stress relief. Now I feel so much fitter. I'm more motivated in my everyday life and my abs and arms are more defined — pre-baby."

Quinn, a mother of two, was also thrilled to find a program where she could bring her kids and have them sit next to her while she worked out if they wanted to. She

said she drives 45 minutes each way for the boot camp because "nothing else is comparable."

Sampieri-Griffin said the boot camp stemmed from her own frustration with the of available child care options at fitness centers. Three years ago, when the trainer and mother of two moved to Blairstown from Sparta, she discovered that it was impossible to find a fitness facility with child care without driving as long as it took her to work out, or, she discovered that the centers that provided child care were expensive.

"There was nothing," said the 35-year-old mother. "So instead of complaining, I would fix it and offer child care."

In May 2009, Sampieri-Griffin became a certified personal trainer, began her business, NJ Fit Moms, and started offering private and small group training to those who desired her enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise.

By the summer of 2010, she created Boot Camp for Moms, which Sampieri-Griffin said has limitless ben-

efits, including increased health, fitness, energy, and stronger bones, sharper minds and improved mood. Sampieri-Griffin also made it a point to have affordable childcare on the premises, or "supervised play dates at the park" during spring and summer months.

Each class is a total body workout by applying interval training, a method that combines strength training and cardiovascular training that keeps the heart rate racing throughout the 45- to 60-minute workouts held three days a week.

Sampieri-Griffin said she often incorporates kickboxing, Pilates, sport drills, obstacle courses and plyometrics into each session and modifies the intensity of each workout to meet and challenge the fitness level of every mom.

"I wasn't doing any exercise apart from walking the dog," McGovern said. "I liked the idea of this because it does a lot of different things. It's not boring, it keeps you going."

"I wanted to get fitter and I definitely noticed a difference

(in six weeks)," she said. "I couldn't do pushups or crunches. Now, I can actually hold the plank and do more crunches, when I could hardly get off the floor before."

The camp quickly tripled from eight women in the first session last June to nearly 30 by the most recent camp in March and April.

"There has been a core group of six women, who have been with me since the first class," Sampieri-Griffin said. "Their bodies have changed tremendously. They've gotten so much stronger and I've seen their attitudes change. They want to work harder."

"(Boot Camp for Moms) has helped them broaden their horizons for fitness," she said. "They get an hour to really take care of themselves and push themselves to see what they can do."

Last fall, Sampieri-Griffin challenged the moms to take on a 5K/10K. This summer, they're going after a warrior dash in New York, a 31/2 mile course, where they will scale walls, wet ford mud rivers and charge pits of fire to test their limits.

## Poll: U.S. economy improving despite events

WASHINGTON (AP) — Economists say the U.S. economy is gaining strength despite political unrest in North Africa and the Middle East and last month's devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

A survey from the National Association for Business Economics finds that economists are hopeful that the broader economy is substantially improving, with rising employment reported for the fifth quarter in a row. The survey found that "companies appear to be positioning themselves for a firming economic environment," said Shawn DuBravac, an economist with the Consumer Electronics Association, who analyzed the findings.

The outlook for employment rose slightly, reaching a 12-year high. No firms reported significant layoffs, with the only reductions coming from already planned cuts.

Sales increased for the third consecutive quarter, profit margins continued to improve and the number of economists whose firms increased spending over the previous quarter held steady. Nearly all of the 72 economists surveyed, about 94 percent, now expect the economy to grow at least 2 percent in 2011.

The quarterly survey includes the views of economists for private companies and trade groups who are NABE members. The data are reported by broad industry groupings.

Many results in the survey are expressed through the Net Rising Index, or NRI — the percentage of panelists reporting better outlooks minus the percentage whose outlook is bleaker.

The survey looked at two new questions for its April survey, gauging the financial impact of anti-government unrest in the Arab world

and the deadly Japanese earthquake and tsunami.

Nearly 60 percent of those polled said they expected higher costs because of political turmoil in Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Syria and about 52 percent said they expected economic growth to be weaker in 2011 because of the protests and fighting.

The March 11 earthquake and tsunami, which left nearly 28,000 people dead or missing and sparked a crisis at a nuclear plant, had less of an impact on the economic forecasts. About 31 percent said costs would be higher and 40 percent said it would weaken the broader economic recovery.

In the first quarter of this year, 63 percent of economists said sales rose from the previous quarter — the highest percentage since 1994. The NRI rating for sales rose 11 points from the previous quarter to 54, and the improvement was across

all industry sectors: goods, utilities, information and communications, finance, insurance and real estate, and services.

Profit margins rose to an NRI figure of 31 — the highest rating since 1983. The number of economists reporting rising profits has almost doubled over the past year, to 45 percent from 25 percent.

Prices rose, with about one third of those surveyed saying their firms had made increases over the past three months.

Two-thirds of the goods-producing industry, which includes farming, mining, construction and manufacturing, reported their firms had raised prices.

Similarly, the costs paid for materials rose for the third quarter in a row and wages and salaries jumped to the highest reading since a survey in October 2007.

The survey was conducted between March 16 and 31.

### Business Briefs

#### Biondo mutual fund ranked No. 1

MILFORD, Pa. — Biondo Investment Advisors, an independent boutique investment firm located in Milford, announced that the company's mutual fund, Biondo Focus Fund (BFONX), was ranked No. 1 for funds in its category and ranked in the top 30 of all funds by Morningstar. This is based on total returns year to date through April 1. The fund is also ranked in the top 25 of its category based on one-year total returns through April 1. These results can be found online at Morningstar.com.

"It's hard for people to put all their 'eggs in one basket,' which makes mutual funds a good alternative that provides many benefits that are often overlooked, misunderstood, or not even known by the average investor," said Joseph P. Biondo, portfolio manager and chief investment advisor at Biondo Investment Advisors. "The Biondo Focus Fund is a portfolio of our best investment ideas from our various investment strategies. We monitor these companies closely and make adjustments based on how well the companies are performing."

The Biondo Focus Fund returned 14.63 percent in the year to date period through March 31. "There are over 15,000 mutual funds covered by Morningstar, so clearly being in the top 30 is quite an honor," Biondo continued. "Also being ranked in the top of our category year to date is the result of a great deal of hard work and some good decision making by our talented team."

Biondo Investment Advisors, LLC, was created in 2004 by Joseph R. Biondo Sr., a veteran in the finance industry. During the volatile times since then, the independent firm's mission has been to create and preserve wealth for foundations, institutions, as well as individuals and their families by developing relationships based on trust and confidence, regardless of the market.

To learn more, call 570-296-5525 or visit [www.TheBiondoGroup.com](http://www.TheBiondoGroup.com)

#### Event features Priceline founder

MADISON — Fairleigh Dickinson University's Rothman Institute of Entrepreneurship will host Jeff Hoffman, co-founder of Priceline, on May 2, for the 13th annual Richard M. Clarke Distinguished Entrepreneurial Lecture and Awards Ceremonies for the 2011 FDU Innovation Challenge. The event will be held in Hennessy Hall, at FDU's College at Florham in Madison, from 6 to 8:15 p.m.

The evening will begin with an elegant reception on the portico outside Hennessy Hall at 6 p.m., followed by the awards ceremony for the FDU Innovation Challenge Awards at 6:45 p.m. Hoffman will share his entrepreneurial journey at 7:15 p.m.

Hoffman is an accomplished entrepreneur and innovator. Having launched his first software company while still a student at Yale University, Hoffman has founded and grown a series of successful startup companies. Best known as a founder and CEO in the Priceline.com family of companies, Hoffman led the development and launch of Priceline's consumer company, Priceline is website which helps travelers obtain discount rates for airline tickets and hotel stays.

Hoffman is currently a partner in ColorJar, a venture accelerator firm that assists entrepreneurs launch and grow new business ventures. In this capacity, Hoffman works with startup companies all over the country to help turn great ideas in to profitable businesses. Part of the Silberman College of Business since 1989, the mission of the Rothman Institute for Entrepreneurship is to teach and support entrepreneurship and innovation in the academic, business and nonprofit communities.

Admission is free but registration is required. For more information or to register, contact the Rothman Institute at 973-443-8842 or [rothman@fdu.edu](mailto:rothman@fdu.edu). FDU's College at Florham is at 285 Madison Ave., Madison.