

CNY'S 'PULSE' BEATS ON



By Julia Terruso

Tammy Panzironi was taking an aerobics class in Syracuse 19 years ago when her instructor invited her to become a teacher for the studio. She took the job and taught with the enthusiasm and upbeat coordination she's become known for. But on the inside, Panzironi found the routines monotonous and the workouts bland.

"Everything was kind of stale," Panzironi said, "And then someone told me about Zumba and I fell in love with it right away."

Zumba, a Latin inspired dance fitness, combines physical exercise with hip-popping salsa moves for a fun, engaging workout. "It's an extremely lively, and always changing form of exercise," Panzironi said. "It really doesn't even feel like a workout."

Her clients agree. Since Panzironi opened her studio, Pulse Fitness Studio, in January 2010, she's taught hundreds of men and women the exercise. Pulse also offers classes in belly dancing, yoga and kickboxing.

Pulse has become a hub for a diverse group of exercise-seekers. Its location on West Fayette Street in Syracuse makes it a convenient stop for inner-city residents as well as suburbanites on their way home from work.

The result is a highly eclectic group of surgeons and teachers, students and retirees working out together in the brightly painted studio.

"I like that I'm providing for the inner city population as well as prominent doctors and professionals. They're all dancing together," Panzironi said. "That's the really rewarding bit, how we've become a family."

The workout involves a set of dance routines but beginners can pick it up easily, Panzironi said. Zumba helps with coordination confidence, cardio, toning and weight lost.

"It's absolutely wonderful," said Sonny Berson, 54, who comes to Pulse three times a week. Berson has dropped two dress sizes since she started Zumba classes in July. She attends three times a week. "It's addictive. It's intoxicating," Berson said. "But in a good way. I'm more toned now than I was in my 20s."

Panzironi has been working in the fitness industry for 18 years. She's certified and licensed to teach Zumba. Before opening Pulse, Panzironi worked as an independent fitness consultant for University Hospital, Syracuse University, Crouse Hospital, Syracuse Developmental Center, Oasis Center, the town of DeWitt, and local health clubs and nursing homes. For eight years she wrote a monthly fitness column for the local publication, Table Hopping, where her husband is an editor.

Panzironi has also found ways to give back to the community. She held a benefit for Father Champlin's Guardian Angel Society, which funds Catholic schools scholarships and held a Zumba-thon for breast cancer in September.

Having just celebrated the one-year anniversary of her studio with celebratory Zumba classes and belly dancing, Panzironi offers this New Year's resolution advice for anyone looking to shed some pounds.

"Find a form of exercise you enjoy doing, otherwise you're not going to stick with it," she said. "Life's too serious. You have to find a way to make it fun for yourself."

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