

Business Connection

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Durango Independent Film Festival Joanie Fraughton

written by Sara Lynn (Kuntz) Valentine

The twelfth annual Durango Independent Film Festival takes place March 1 to 5, 2017. Joanie Fraughton has been part of it since the beginning. "I started out as an organizer and programmer, became the Festival Coordinator, and am now the Executive Director," Joanie says. "Each year we share over 100 innovative and diverse films that inspire, enlighten, educate and provide escape. Audience members can meet filmmakers and hear the stories behind the stories - how, for instance, some independent filmmakers max out their credit cards just to finish a film. Getting insights into the process and connecting with filmmakers - that's what sets the film festival experience apart from just going to see a movie."

Volunteers are needed for festival week and Joanie also looks for sponsors and donors. Films are screened all over town and even taken to Ignacio schools and to Animas High. The Festival pays for busses to transport 9-R middle school students to the mall for screenings. "It's a REEL learning experience," Joanie says. "Students have great questions for the filmmakers. They might learn a lesson from a film's subject matter, or how films are animated, or how a screenwriter came up with a story." Students and teachers are given ballots to rate and comment on the films, which helps Festival organizers track and follow up on how effective the school programs are, in order to continually make improvements.

Joanie says sponsoring the Festival is a great way for local businesses to gain exposure. "We get our sponsors' names out there. We have signage, we do on screen recognition and all our sponsors are on the trailer and in the program. Sponsors get passes and are invited to the parties. One of my sponsors said, 'Sponsoring the film festival is like being a part of a happening scene for one week. it's thrilling, it's scintillating, it's fun!'"

"We've invited Jim Belushi this year - he'll be representing a film and we also booked the Community Concert Hall for Belushi and the Sacred Hearts for a concert on Saturday night, March 4th. So now I'm a concert booker as well as Executive Director! Belushi's a performer so it will be fun!"

"Being a member of the Chamber has been helpful to us, too. We feel like we're part of the business community, even though we're a non profit. "Please see www.durangofilm.org or call 970.946.1108 for more information.



PHD Advanced Nutrition • Ashley Lucas

written by Sara Lynn (Kuntz) Valentine

"My husband, Doug, and I both trained as ballet dancers," Ashley says. "I started as a child of three and was seriously considering ballet as a profession by ten. I went to a boarding school, The HARID Conservatory, for high school, then on to the University of Utah, where I completed an undergraduate degree in Ballet Performance. I danced with the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, appearing several years in the Nutcracker Suite on stage at Durango's Community Concert Hall."

Ashley continued her ballet career with the Richmond Ballet in Virginia, but kept getting injured. "When you can't follow your passion anymore, it can be difficult to find a new passion. I decided to go into the field of nutrition, because as an athlete, I recognized how much diet impacts health and fitness." Ashley went back to school and earned a PhD in Sports Nutrition and Chronic Disease, additionally completing a dietetic internship in order to become a registered dietitian. She and her husband Doug, an orthopedic surgeon with Mercy Orthopedics, moved to Durango in 2015 and began their respective practices.

The mission of PHD Advanced Nutrition is to improve health, wellness, and performance. The clinic focuses on weight management via an integrative program that emphasizes an anti-inflammatory diet, along with behavior modification. "Our first task is to determine optimal weight for each individual, based upon their unique body composition. Every client's program is customized - the amount of protein or carbs necessary, for example, varies between people. It's not one size fits all," Ashley says. The clinic also specializes in enhancing sports performance - they work with all types of recreational to professional athletes.

"I disagree with the conventional dietary wisdom. I don't think it

works for most people. My protocol is not a moderate approach - rather, it involves a lifestyle investment. My clients must be ready to change when they walk in the door. Their desire to change has to significantly outweigh their desire to cling to old habits. I promote a diet that reduces inflammation - the effects of these dietary changes are pretty immediate and the health outcomes are amazing."

Ashley's clients range from overweight adolescents to high school athletes, to men and women of all ages and all abilities. "They feel great and don't experience hunger or cravings. No yoyo dieting. They experience improvements in general wellbeing and enhanced sports performance as well as body composition improvements. I do love what I do. I love working one on one with people. We can make amazing transformations in people's lives! Their successes motivate them to continue with good habits. I feel so fortunate that I can help people in this way."

"The Chamber is great. I've met a lot of great people and learned a lot about this community. Jack Llewellyn provided me with a welcome packet and so much good material. I was happy to give a Lunch & Learn that sold out within the first few hours!"

Ashley juggles her practice with parenting two boys, one 4 1/2 and one 3.

You can learn more about Ashley at www.phdadvancednutrition.com or call 970.764.4133.

