



## Fitting honor for fitness 'coach'

### More than sweat, spandex needed to win top honors

By Kathryn Richert

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Shannon Griffiths-Fable knows that group fitness classes aren't just about pump-up music and insanely energetic instructors who yell loudly.

Griffiths-Fable says that is just breaking a sweat for fitness instructors, but to be named Group Fitness Instructor of the Year, much more is required. Fable would know □ she won.

Griffiths-Fable, 32, is the director of group fitness at Lakeshore Athletic Club in Broomfield. She teaches a variety of classes including cycling, strength training and cardio. She recently received the Group Fitness Instructor of the Year honor from the American Council on Exercise (ACE) □ the largest nonprofit fitness certification and education provider in the world □ not because she teaches the most packed classes or has the hardest classes, but because of the way she communicates with her classes, she said.

"It's about challenging them to decide for themselves what they need, instead of me deciding for them in my car on the way to class," Griffiths-Fable said.

Instead of telling classes to increase their weights, pick up the pace or do more reps, she asks them to do what is best for them.

"You think of a cheerleader on crack when you think of a group fitness instructor. It motivates, but it turns some people away," Griffiths-Fable said. "I teach by asking instead of motivating and constantly hooting and hollering."

Rachel Lindstrom, group fitness instructor at Lakeshore Athletic Club, said she enjoys Griffiths-Fable's classes because of her teaching methods.

"It puts the participant in control of their own progress and workout, which makes her a coach rather than a dictator," Lindstrom said. "She guides them instead of telling them what to do, which makes people feel more successful at the end of their workout."

Griffiths-Fable said today's fitness classes are less geared toward beginning or advanced.

"My mom could be riding next to Lance Armstrong," Fable said, which is why she strives to give individualized attention in a group fitness setting.

Griffiths-Fable credits her background in sociology and communication for knowing how to motivate people and bring a "soft side" to the fitness industry. The fitness industry focuses on anatomy,

kinesiology and physiology, all of which are important, Griffiths-Fable said, "but at the end of the day, if you can't get mom off the couch, you've missed the boat."

Griffiths-Fable said she won the award not just for what she brings to class, but for what she brings to the fitness industry. She only teaches three classes a week at Lakeshore Athletic Club, but has made a full-time career out of being a group fitness instructor and educator, something she says she is fortunate to be able to do.

In addition to being an ACE-certified personal trainer and managing 75 instructors while teaching her classes, Griffiths-Fable is the founder and CEO of Sunshine Fitness, LLC, a fitness education company she founded in 2003.



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