

Personal trainer uses life lessons to help others

Chris McCallum has been through a lot to get where he is today. He has achieved a position of security and success, working as a personal trainer for Body & Soul in Simpsonville after graduating with a



depression, bi-polar depression, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Chris spent years trying to get his life straightened out including some time at Gateway House in Greenville, a group home for those with mental illnesses. At times he was so heavily medicated that he was barely able to function.

When he got involved with the Personal Trainer program, he found that by regulating his diet and exercise, he could reduce the amount of medication he was taking to where he requires almost none.

Now he's developed a wellness program for the

residents of Gateway House. By presenting information on nutrition, he's hoping to change habits that have caused some of his former neighbors to be overweight. Once they have their eating habits under control, Chris would like to lead an exercise program for them.

straight A average from Greenville Tech.

Things haven't always gone that smoothly for Chris. In fact, he nearly flunked out of high school before being diagnosed with schizo-affective disorder, one name for a group of symptoms including those of schizophrenia, major

Mom on a mission

When she turned 50 two years ago, Donna Halbert found out that she was suffering from a borderline case of osteoporosis. Though she exercised regularly, Donna had never performed weight-bearing exercises.

Knowing that this is one way to increase bone mass, she started looking

for a way to learn more and found Greenville Tech's Personal Trainer program.

Once she got enrolled, Donna discovered more than just informa-

tion on how to exercise properly. She discovered a career specialty: helping women over age 35 with health-related issues.

To get started in her specialty, Donna plans to work with some of the women in her church, Southside Fellowship, who've asked to be among her first clients. From there, she's considering opening an exercise studio at home or working at a club.

In her Personal Trainer classes, Donna is affectionately known as "Mom," an age-based distinction that doesn't bother her at all. Though many of her classmates are in their 20's, one of the instructors, Gyle Atwood, went

through the program himself, and at age 61, gives Donna a little balance on the age continuum.

At home, Donna also answers to the name "Mom." Her son, a 21 year old college student, enjoys comparing notes with her about the way she prepares for class.



"He teases me because I actually read the books," she says. "He says college students don't read their books."

Family members also tease her about

being a health nut. That, Donna says, is almost essential in her program of study. "When we go around and introduce ourselves, most of us say we want to help other people and most have always been interested in health and exercise," she says.

For Donna, fitness is a mission with a target market. "Fifty percent of women out there are walking around with osteoporosis and they don't even know it.

"It's a silent disease, and what we're doing through our diet and lack of exercise contributes to that," she says. "I just want to kind of use it as a wake-up call to women to say that we need to be doing this."

Having overcome many obstacles, Chris takes great pride in what he has accomplished. "I'm trying to live my life now to help others," he says.

Hired after completing an internship at Body & Soul, Chris says he couldn't have asked for a better situation. Working in a small health club where he can get to know his clients well suits him perfectly.

In just two and a half months, he's built a small client base, and the list continues to grow. These clients, ranging in age from their 20's to their 60's, come to Chris with different goals. He designs exercise program that are bringing results.

To succeed as a personal trainer, Chris says, you need to have your heart in the right place. "It's not about the money," he says. "It's about helping people better their lives."

Finding the perfect career means trainer will never have to work

When Spencer Moon entered the Personal Trainer program at Greenville Tech a year ago, fitness had been his lifestyle and passion for quite some time, and he thought he had a pretty thorough knowledge of the career.

Being in the program showed him just how much he still needed to learn. "I knew a lot when I went in there, but compared to what I know now, I didn't know much at all," he says.

Some of the new skills he's learned include teaching neural connection (mind to muscle), developing sports-specific workouts, teaching joint angle specificity, adjusting rep speeds, and creating routines and programs for different client needs.

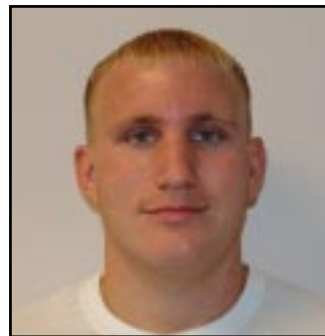
Unfortunately, Spencer says, many personal trainers in our state never seek the education they need to do their jobs better. "In South Carolina, as of now, you do not have to have a personal trainer certification. You don't have to have any kind of certification," he says.

"I've seen people come in off the street and just want to start training. Just because they made their own bodies look good or may be bodybuilders does not mean that they have the knowledge to work with someone else's body that is totally opposite from their own.

Those people are known as repetition counters because they have no idea of what it takes to be a certified personal trainer," he adds.

Finding a job that doesn't seem like work is something Spencer feels very fortunate about. In a previous job, he hated even walking in the door and spent much of the day looking at his watch.

"This is my life-long passion whether I eventually go into management or own my own gym," he says.



Points of Interest

• The Job

Personal trainers work with clients on a one-on-one basis, helping individuals to reach their fitness goals.

Those who choose this field should be outgoing, good at motivating people, and sensitive to the needs of others.

Excellent health and fitness are required due to the physical nature of the job.

• The Outlook

Employment is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations as increasing numbers of people spend time and money on leisure and fitness services.

Growth will also come from rising demand for fitness activities for older adults in senior centers, retirement communities, and other settings.

In addition, as businesses recognize the benefits of providing wellness activities, opportunities will be created in the corporate setting.

• The Salaries

Since many personal trainers are self employed, earnings vary.

• The Web

Learn more about this field and others by checking out books, magazines, and videotapes at your school or local library.

The Internet is also a great resource. Here are some sites to get you started.

www.acefitness.org
American Council on Exercise

www.acsm.org
American College of Sports Medicine

www.nscs-lift.org
National Strength and Conditioning Association

www.nasm.org
National Academy of Sports Medicine

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Planning to attend Greenville Tech next year?

Start the admissions and financial aid process now!

Learn more about how S.C. Education Lottery funds can help you get started.

Call 864-250-8111 today.



School-To-Work
Educational Pathways To The World

Find the career that's right for you!

Learn about our 21 health and nursing choices including the Personal Trainer program at Career Talk.

Tonight • 6 p.m.

Call (864)250-8111 for location information.



www.greenvilletech.com