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## Zumba for health

### Latin aerobic exercise makes workout fun

By Mary Wade Burnside



PHOTO BY  
TAMMY SHRIVER

FAIRMONT — Janet Trump was 10 pounds from her goal of losing 147 pounds when she found Zumba, a Latin aerobic exercise that, along with a diet, changed her life.

"It just helps to keep it off," said Trump, who works in the financial aid office at West Virginia University and drives to Fairmont once a week to take a Zumba class taught by Alexandra Amedro, who helped bring the exercise to the area.

"And it's not just about the weight loss," Trump added. "It's just a really good stress reliever. I work in a pretty stressful environment, and we just have fun. We scream, we yell and do whatever."

In addition to the class taught by Amedro on Wednesday nights at the I-79 Technology Center at the West Virginia High Technology Consortium, Brionna Harvey has started teaching Zumba three times a week at Country Club Health and Fitness in Fairmont.

"I've always taught dance since high school, and been involved with twirling and majorette competitions," Harvey said. "I thought, why not exercise and do something I enjoy and get paid?"

Harvey's classes just started in early February and will continue when the club relocates to a new building with a new name — Fairmont Fitness — during the spring. Anyone can take the

classes, which cost \$5.

"It's gotten to be a very popular activity, and people really seem to like it," said Randy Murray, co-owner of Country Club Health and Fitness. "People all over the country are falling in love with Zumba."

Amedro was one of the first from this area. The Morgantown resident and former WVHTC employee, a native of Colombia, already taught regular aerobics but wished for something with more of a Latin flavor.

About four years ago, pregnant with her twins, she saw an infomercial about Zumba, a Latin-based aerobics dance class created by a man named Alberto "Beto" Perez. In 2006, Amedro traveled to Dayton, Ohio, to take a Zumba workshop from Perez and then started teaching classes at a variety of locations in Morgantown and eventually Fairmont. She has her own Web site, [www.zumbaforlife.com](http://www.zumbaforlife.com).

One class at Chestnut Ridge Church in Morgantown attracts 70 to 80 people, and Amedro said she has a mailing list of about 1,000 people who come to classes.

Zumba is based on Latin dances such as salsa and merengue, Amedro said. But participants do not have to worry about being able to follow along.

"Even though I change the songs, the basic steps are there," Amedro said. "In every class, I demonstrate that these are the steps for salsa and I show the steps for salsa."

Mary Lou McDonald, who works at WVHTC and takes the Wednesday class, agrees.

"What I tell everybody new is that it's follow the leader," McDonald said. "There is nothing to memorize. You just do what your instructor is doing. There is not a lot of steps."

Trump does not worry about getting the steps exactly right. "It doesn't matter if you move exactly like Alex does," she said. "Once I said, 'I'm not moving like her,' I'm just moving and having fun."

Many participants noted how they had made friends with fellow Zumba enthusiasts, and now Trump joins in when some of the exercisers start singing along to the catchy Latin tunes.

That in itself is a triumph for the woman who lost 147 pounds.

"Before, I never would have been able to do that plus move at a high pace," she said.

From noon to 4 p.m. March 29, a Zumba marathon will allow people to do the exercise they love while raising money for the Sabraton Community Building on Listravia Avenue in Morgantown, one of the class locations.

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Trump, who recently planned her graduate study classes around her Zumba schedule, probably will be there.

"It's pretty bad when you start planning your class schedule around your Zumba classes," she said. "I tried to figure out, 'What night can I take class and miss the least amount of Zumba?'"

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