

OneFITMama

By Edie Weinstein-Moser

I believe quite strongly in synchronicity and see it every day. Combine a walking work-out with an essential item belonging to a small boy, a beautiful mid-summer day in Philadelphia and four people who apparently were meant to come together and you have the makings of a story with a happy ending.



On August 5th, I joined my friend Cliff for an early morning hike along Forbidden Drive in Fairmount Park. We were on this beautiful tree-lined trail for a matter of minutes, when his attention was drawn to the rock strewn ground. "There it is," he exclaimed delightedly. "There what is," I asked as he bent down to pick up a small object. He held in his hand a child's hearing aid. "I saw a sign at the entrance of the trail saying that a child had lost a hearing aid with a red elephant sticker on it. Here it is!" Whoa! What are the chances of that happening? Horses and hundreds of people walk on that path weekly and the hearing aid was undamaged, not even water-logged. Cliff made a quick phone call and a few hours later; we were greeted by a sprite of a woman named Patricia Streit Perez, toting a beautiful dark haired tyke named Caleb, the owner of the hearing aid. He was the inspiration for Tricia's blossoming company "One Fit Mama!"

Edie: How did One Fit Mama get its start?

Tricia: My son Caleb was born in February of 2005, and I worked in Sports Medicine at Temple University. I went back to work a couple days a week, part time. After I went back, I needed to find something else, because I couldn't bear to leave him at home while I was at work and traveling with my team. I also had trouble trying to find time to go the gym and that was a big part of my life. I started to research and see what was out there. I didn't find a program that I loved enough, so I created a program on my own, walking through the neighborhood with Caleb. It started in September and that was it.

Edie: Because you are a "fit mama" and it was important to you, you have the technical expertise and are the ideal person to offer this to other women.

Tricia: Hopefully my resume speaks for itself. I have a Bachelor's in Sports Medicine and a Masters in Sports Management, so it's been nice to use my management degree as well which doesn't

really come into play too often as an athletic trainer for division one athletics.

Edie: What is the average age range of the women who participate in your program?

Tricia: I would say most of the moms are in their late twenties to early thirties. There are some younger moms and some in their forties.

Edie: Did they have an exercise routine before they got pregnant, so it was easier to pick back up with it, or are some of these women brand new to fitness?

Tricia: The majority of them were active prior to becoming pregnant and didn't know where to turn after having their babies. I do have a few moms who haven't done anything in years or hadn't done anything ever. It's definitely very rewarding to work with those moms to show them what to do and the reasons that it is so beneficial to expose their child to a healthy lifestyle.

Edie: There is no longitudinal evidence as to how it is going to impact on the kids, but my guess is that they are going to see this as the beginning of a lifetime of fitness.

Tricia: Oh absolutely. Some of the moms start with their babies when they turn six weeks old. They are seeing their moms work out as part of regular life rather than sitting at home watching television. I have some kids, including my own, who do the exercises on their own. When we go to Forbidden Drive, my son does push-ups against the fence and even though he is eighteen months old, he does squats and starts grunting. A woman in class on Friday said she almost called me because she heard this growling and grunting. She was in the kitchen and her daughter was running around the house doing squats as she went back and forth. It's affecting them even as toddlers and it's pretty funny to watch.

Eddie: What does the program look like?

Tricia: The primary service we offer is stroller fitness and the classes are an hour long. I usually start women out with a good warm-up and then some type of interval training with power walking and jogging. For forty minutes, we are power walking and jogging with the children in the strollers and we're running and jumping, incorporating resistance bands during a large part of our workout. We do different activities that will stimulate the children as well. For the last twenty minutes, we're down on the ground with the kids and working our abs and backs and improving flexibility.

Eddie: What's the length of time that most women participate in your program?

Tricia: I'm very lucky. I have a lot of moms who started last September and are still participating. I can probably count on one hand the number of moms who started exercising with me and have stopped. They enjoy the social aspects of it as much as their children do. I have very loyal customers and they are all becoming friends of mine as well. The longest amount of time has been nearly a year.

Eddie: How long would the ideal be?

Tricia: They can stay as long as their child is ok in the stroller. The average age of the children is six weeks to about two years. I have some children who are about three-and-a-half to four years old that come. One mom who is going to be an instructor for me in the fall, has a three-year-old and during the summer her ten and twelve year old exercised with her.

Eddie: In that way, again, you are focusing on family fitness. Does Caleb like it?

Tricia: Oh, he loves it. He has such a fun time and hams it up. Caleb knows all the kids and gets excited and shouts their names, which is exciting for me, because with his hearing loss, he is learning so much by being there.

Eddie: And the other kids are learning from him, because they see a child who might otherwise feel stigmatized or



different, as just being another kid.

Tricia: Oh, absolutely!

Eddie: What do you do in the winter?

Tricia: We move all of our classes indoors. We'll be in at least two malls and I've talked to a few others. I have two churches that we can operate out of and the Briar Bush Nature Center in Abington. We go six days a week in the winter time. That's one of the hardest times to be stuck inside the house with a baby.

Eddie: Besides the physical fitness aspect, it improves socialization for the mothers and the children. If there is underlying depression, I'm sure that it helps with that too. I'm wondering what impact it would have on the relationship between mother and child and between the parents if they are doing this together.

Tricia: I can't quote you any studies on this, but definitely, I see the moms bonding with their babies during class. This one mom had a baby who would cry from 3:00 in the afternoon until 11:00 at night every day for about two months. He was that colicky. She would come out and enjoy her child in class and realize that everything was going to be ok. It really is important that moms can bond with their baby, because if not, they really can get socially isolated and resent their situation. Once moms feel better about themselves and do something that makes them healthier, they have better self esteem which in turn, improves their relationships with the fathers as well.

Eddie: If there was one thing you would want people to know about your program, what would it be?

Tricia: Women at any fitness level can come out and benefit from the program. Some may be intimidated because they haven't worked out in some time or some may think they won't get enough challenge because they are already fit. I am certainly able to modify everyone's workout to fit their skill level.

Check out *One Fit Mama's* website at www.onefitmama.com *One Fit Mama* is based out of Oreland, and holds classes in Philadelphia, Montgomery, and Bucks Counties. 215.886.2869 info@onefitmama.com



Edie Weinstein-Moser is a journalist, speaker, massage and reiki practitioner, interfaith minister, therapist and clown. Her fitness joys include yoga, dance, drumming, hiking and swimming. She can be reached at edie@phillyfitmagazine.com.