

Fitness has a new face at FACT

BY KATE THURMOND

FACT Fitness has opened at Wolf Ranch Town Center, but it's not your average gym.

The new facility, owned by Robert Otis, specializes in athletes. He took over the space formerly occupied by Gold's Gym, but visitors would be hard pressed to find any similarities between the two.

Mr. Otis has filled his gym with an indoor turf field, three batting cages, a basketball court, and a full-sized weight room.

Mr. Otis comes from a long history of coaching basketball, which was the inspiration for opening his first location in California in 2013.

"I noticed the need for sports performance training," he said. "I was looking at the quality of the kids coming in and what they could or couldn't do. I saw there was a gap in speed, agility and strength training."

Even the name FACT stands for Foundational Athletic Coaching Techniques, although over the years Mr. Otis branched out beyond youth sports and trained professional athletes including MMA fighters and members of the Golden State Warriors.

In 2018, he and his wife Angelica along with their three children made a new home in Georgetown, lured here by friends in Williamson County.

In early 2019 he opened FACT's second location — located on Williams Drive — where he began working with athletes, ranging from high school and middle school students to professional adult athletes.

When the pandemic hit, Mr. Otis decided to close



The Georgetown High School football team trains together in the facility.

both his Williams Drive and California locations, concentrating on opening one larger facility.

"I was getting close to outgrowing [the spaces]," he said. "This is the vision I always had for what I wanted FACT to look like. I finally get to have everything under one roof."

FACT currently works with a staff of retired athletes and sports specialists, and offers three adult classes outside of personal training. The classes include yoga, high intensity interval training, and an affiliate crossfit program. They also plan to add kickboxing in early 2021.

The facility officially opened Aug. 3. After seeing 30 clients that first week, weekly attendance is now about 120.

"On the sports side, it's been fantastic," Mr. Otis said. "But I also want to

move into being a full-service recovery facility as well."

He plans to do this by adding cryotherapy, an in-house chiropractor and a physical therapist in December. He is also seeking a massage therapist to add to the team.

Even though he is constantly building the business, Mr. Otis prefers to recruit gym members by word of mouth.

"We do everything based on results," he said. "That's why we're able to stay busy off referrals. I feel like if I can do good for someone here, they'll do good for me out in the world."

He also feels that his gym offers a unique experience in the midst of Georgetown opening multiple new gyms across the city.

"We work with a lot of tech equipment you wouldn't find in a normal

gym," he said.

The equipment is all geared toward helping athletes hone necessary skills in the field. Mr. Otis has brought in a Hit Trax system for his baseball clients, which measures exit velocity of hit balls.

There is also a speed sensory light system that helps train reaction time and coordination.

FACT's state-of-the-art facility has drawn athletes from the NFL's Houston Texans to baseball players from Mexico to train at his new Georgetown location.

"I think we have an exciting, welcoming environment," Mr. Otis said. "We really care about people getting the results they want. I think that's what makes us stand out."

The new FACT is located at 1019 W. University Avenue, near the Loft Clothing store.

Friends adapting activities, raising funds

BIBLIOFILES

Dana Hendrix

The Friends of the Georgetown Public Library raise funds for many of the library's programs, services and collections. The organization purchased the WOW! Mobile and the WOW:HD (Words on Wheels bookmobile and Home Delivery van), which provide personalized comprehensive library service to people who may have difficulty visiting our community library — including seniors, the physically limited, children and teens.

The group also provides funding for Live Music at the Library and the Hill Country Authors Series, and very importantly in 2020, they fund our e-books and e-audiobooks, which are being checked out at a rate that is 50 percent higher than in a typical year; as people are staying home to avoid COVID infections. E-books and e-audiobooks on average cost much more than print books and audiobooks, and multiple copies must often be purchased to meet increased demand.

Operating the Second-Hand Prose used book store is one of the ways the Friends raise money for the

library, but currently the Second-Hand Prose bookstore is unable to be open due to the library building closure.

This year's Friends' December Giving Season fund-raiser is in full swing, and it will become an annual event. Monetary gifts are needed to help maintain service to the community. Please consider making a tax-deductible charitable gift now by visiting folgeorgetown.org/product/donation. If you prefer to mail a check, please send it to Friends of the Georgetown Public Library, 402 W. 8th Street, Georgetown, TX 78626. Make checks payable to Friends of the Georgetown Library and write on the memo line Giving Season.

The library staff thanks our community for donating, and our Friends for helping us during this critical time.

Dana Hendrix is the Adult Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.

Library Update

The Georgetown Public Library building remains closed to the public and the WOW! mobile is not running, but curbside pickup of previously reserved materials is available six days a week at the library:

Monday–Friday 10 a.m.–noon and 2–6 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m.–noon and 2–5 p.m.

For more information, go to library.georgetown.org or call 512-930-3551.

Masks lead to listening fatigue

Liz Stewart would like to bring attention to Covid-related communication challenges for those with loss of hearing. When Covid hit and masks became necessary, Liz was immediately aware of how difficult it would be for the hard of hearing or deaf.

"I noticed people were having a hard time understanding each other," Liz said.

She visited with a man at H-E-B who had a hearing aid. He said he hated the masks because he couldn't understand anyone.

"It's so hard not to take my mask off," he lamented.

Masks limit the quality of speech, and people don't realize how much they read faces. Face shields provide a clear view, but the CDC does not recommend them as a mask substitute. Liz learned that some health care workers were provided with clear masks.

"I found one online. I was so proud until I walked into H-E-B's produce section, and it fogged over." Liz suggests using an anti-fog cleaner when wearing a window mask.

Liz was an extremely shy child growing up in West Texas so her parents enrolled her in community theater.

"I loved it. I wanted to be an actress, but I went into speech pathology instead," she explained. She switched majors after a chance encounter with students from



CONFINED TO QUARTERS

Linda Dwyer

Texas School for the Deaf in Austin.

Liz and her roommate had entered a restaurant on Congress Avenue when they were waved over to join a table of other young adults.

"They were speaking sign language," Liz recalled. "Someone showed me how to say 'my name is Liz' using the finger alphabet. Then he demonstrated a shortcut, using signs. I thought wow. It changed my life."

As luck would have it, the University of Texas at Austin was starting a deaf education degree program, and Liz became the second enrollee. After graduation she taught at Texas School for the Deaf where she was the only teacher at that time with a degree in deaf education.

Liz relocated to teach at New York School for the Deaf, also known as Fanwood. The school had a

strong connection to theater.

"A number of actors graduated from Fanwood," Liz said. "These include Linda Bow, the librarian on *Sesame Street* as well as Phyllis who starred in *Children of a Lesser God*."

Liz's dream of acting came true when she was selected from the Fanwood staff to participate at National Theater of the Deaf one summer. Liz took theater classes and participated in a "good news/bad news" comedy skit. She was also one of the hearing actors who translated sign language to oral language for hearing audience members. Years later, Liz entertained at VA hospitals in New York. She recalled playing the part of Miss Kitty from *Gunsmoke*. Most recently, she has become involved in Georgetown community theater.

I asked how we can better communicate while wearing a mask. Liz explained that voices get muffled, but when we talk louder, it sometimes changes the inflection or tone. Speak up and articulate, but don't shout. Rephrase and slow down for those who nod and smile but don't really understand. If possible, move to a quiet place or eliminate background noise. Most of all she encourages everyone to be patient and use a pleasant voice because "no one can see your smile behind the mask."



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About the Sun

On May 19, 1877, *The Williamson County Sun* printed its first issue, a simple four-page broadsheet. Today the *Sun*, over 143 years old, continues to publish

on the Square in Georgetown and is the longest-running business in the county. In 1974, the *Sun* added a weekend paper, *The Sunday Sun*.