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By: Bronwyn Needles

## NW Women's Fitness and No Bonz About It

The old adage, "location, location, location!" rings true for local business owner Elizabeth Kramer. In the past two years, this savvy investor has purchased two local businesses between the borders of Irvington and Laurelhurst. In January of 2013, she acquired Northwest Women's Fitness Club at 2714 NE Broadway. In November of 2013 she purchased No Bonz About It, one of the original doggie daycare in Portland. Just a short walk from the gym, it is located at 3351 NE Sandy Blvd.



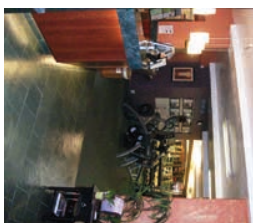
Elizabeth grew up in tiny Jefferson, Oregon. Her father was a welder and her mother stayed at home to raise Elizabeth and her brother. She worked almost full-time while in college at Willamette University in Salem. Graduating with an Economics Degree, she planned for graduate studies but got a job at Enterprise Rent-A-Car for the interim prior to grad school and never looked back. "It was awesome, I loved it! The company is high intensity with a fast track. I really thrived there." She remained at Enterprise 9 years, operating their European division.

When she was ready to start a family, she left Europe and returned to Oregon, working for two years in Tualatin for GE before moving into a Regional VP position at Portland-based KinderCare. "I really loved that job. At Enterprise, I had a great opportunity to learn and become a business operator and manager, but at the end of the day you're putting another car on the road, polluting the earth. I always felt while I was working there I had to do other things to feed my soul. So when I went to work at KinderCare, I found my passion. I could be a business manager AND impact the lives of kids every day." During her time there, Elizabeth oversaw six states, 250 centers and a 100 million dol-

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lar business. She took on an underperforming region and turned it around. "By the second year, I brought our region to the top of the company for growth and profit."

Elizabeth was then recruited to New York for a COO position with Acelero Learning. After two years of getting Acelero up and running, she moved back to Portland. That's when she went to work for Insight Schools, an on-line public high school that enables kids struggling with life circumstances to graduate.

The adoption of her daughter, Olivia, while married to her husband, was a major turning point in her focus. Accustomed to 70 hour work weeks and then divorced shortly after, Elizabeth was the primary bread-winner. "I had that tug all the time," she says of Olivia's early years. The equity investment idea was launched to create balance between business and family.

She chose NW Women's Fitness as her first investment. Opened in 1945 and originally called Johnnie Johnson's Resort to Fitness, it was initially a co-ed facility but converted to a women's gym in 1947. Johnnie's two children eventually took over and converted it to Resort to Fitness. In 2005, Sherri McMillan purchased the gym, changing the focus to emphasize personal training and whole wellness. Sherri remained the club Northwest Women's Fitness. Eight years later, Elizabeth bought the club and currently maintains the modern facility and its team of dynamic personal trainers, group fitness instructors and massage therapists. The gym has come a long way from offering old-fashioned vibrating belt weight loss machines and a

reflective walled tanning room. To celebrate 70 years of fitness revolution in Portland, NWWF will be hosting an anniversary party on October 4 from 1-3 p.m. Members and non-members are invited to come celebrate the club's mission which includes "Helping women around the world adopt a more healthy and fit lifestyle so they look and feel their best!"

While working with Keith Oedrich, an investor in both businesses, at Insight, their long-standing friendship grew into a solid romance. The two are currently engaged and soon to be married.

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on a cruise in July! The couple enjoys wine-tasting, riding bikes and time with Keith's two sons and Elizabeth's daughter. They own a 3-year old Corgi named Lucky who loves to play and snuggle. When not juggling two thriving businesses, Elizabeth trains 3 days a week at NWWF with trainer Samantha Gast. She also runs and has a love/hate relationship with spin class. In the winter, she grounds herself with knitting and reading.

Elizabeth loves being a business owner in the tight-knit communities of Laurelhurst and Irvington. She believes in support-

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ing local businesses and giving back in many ways. NMMWF does an annual sale of ten fitness classes for \$10, donating all proceeds to the local chapter of Girls Inc. Also, every year they host a super fun workout party and needed items drive to benefit the Salvation Army's West Women's and Children's Shelter. No Banz About It enters a team annually in the Doggie Dash and also does a food drive for the Multnomah County Animal Shelter.

To date, Elizabeth has reviewed 300+ businesses with the ultimate goal of owning six or seven. Her criteria is simple: a business must be within an hour drive of her home in SW Portland and be well-established with a solid team of employees. "You come to Northwest Women's Fitness and people are happy and it's a healthy, nurturing environment. At No Banz, all the dogs love you. You go there and get covered in slobber, but it makes you happy! I have a great team there as well."

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