

Military spouse creates ultimate fitness group for parents

It was a rainy Monday morning in Clarksville, Tennessee. Tess Partridge sat in the parking lot prepared to teach her first iStroll fitness class.

“I pulled into the parking lot and wanted to cry because it was raining,” Partridge said. “Two moms and my sister-in-law showed up.”

Partridge said she taught the fitness class in the rain and those two moms ended up coming back. Partridge, 35, a military spouse of 12 years and a mom of three, took a leap of faith and launched iStroll in 2015.

“I felt qualified for the endeavor,” Partridge said. “I have a background in healthcare and played Division 1 soccer in college.”

Partridge said she laid the groundwork for a mommy-and-me style fitness class when she was pregnant with her first child in 2014. She wanted to create something that would allow her to stay home with her children.

“I knew nothing about business ownership,” Partridge said. “I started by getting my insurance and figuring out what licenses I needed to start in Tennessee.”

Partridge said iStroll is a 60-minute workout class for moms and dads where they can bring their kids. It involves high-intensity interval training, body weight, cardio and dumbbells, creating a full-body workout.

“We also offer a virtual program and a nutrition program,” Partridge said. “We are always trying to grow.”

In the first 18 months, Partridge said she had successfully opened three iStroll locations.

“A mom from the first iStroll location moved and opened an iStroll in Oklahoma,” Partridge said. “I had two people see it on social media and open one in Georgia and Kentucky.”

Partridge said the growth of iStroll has been completely organic. People either hear about it through family or friends, see it on social media, or are a current iStroll member who starts a new location.

According to Partridge, iStroll is an affiliate-based business. Each iStroll is individually owned and owners pay a monthly fee to iStroll LLC to use the name aligned with their territory.

“The owners own the rights to host iStroll classes,” Partridge said. “Owners make all the money brought in minus the monthly fee they pay [me].”

“My goal is for it to be affordable for anyone in any location to start their own iStroll,” Partridge said. “I would love to have an iStroll in every state and every community big and small.”

Partridge said COVID-19 threw her business down a unique path she never imagined.

“The year following the pandemic (2021) was our biggest growth,” Partridge said. “It was a super weird slingshot experience.”

Partridge said when lockdown ended people all over were seeking community and fitness groups like hers.

“During the pandemic, we went completely virtual,” Partridge said. “It was definitely a challenge.”

Jessica Donaldson, 34, mom of two, joined iStroll over three years ago.

“My daughter had just turned one and I was in a very bad place with my health,” Donaldson said.

“It brought some of the most amazing women into my life.”

Donaldson, who is now an iStroll instructor at the Fort Carson location in Colorado, said it not only helped her get back on track with her health and fitness, but gave her lifelong friendships and an uplifting community.

“I wanted to tell everyone I met about iStroll,” Donaldson said. “It has changed my life so much.”

Donaldson, a good friend of Partridge, said she was approached about becoming an iStroll fitness instructor.

“My husband was deploying soon,” Donaldson said. “I thought, what a great way to [stay] busy while he was [away].”

“As a military spouse, you don’t [usually] make friends that will last more than two or three years,” Donaldson said. “I can say there is a handful of friends I have gained through iStroll that I will see again.”

Donaldson said Partridge is someone who will always be there to support you whether you’re working out, your kids are having a fit, or your husband’s deployed and you don’t want to make dinner.

“She is an all-around great person who always wants to help,” Donaldson said. “If Tess didn’t create iStroll, I don’t know where my health would be mentally or physically.”

Partridge currently lives in Kentucky and participates in her local iStroll.

“To be honest [iStroll] is at a size where the back-end amount of work, like responding to emails and calls and managing locations is a full-time job,” Partridge said. “My main role is managing and facilitating the growth of iStroll.”

Partridge just published a book called “Find Your Fitness.”

Partridge said the book is geared towards parents of any age who feel too busy to work out or are so busy that they are working out inconsistently.

“The book helps retrain the mentality of not having enough time,” Partridge said. “While offering a skillset to manipulate a workout that works for you.”

“I had a good friend of mine who pushed me to write a book after seeing the experiences I had been through,” Partridge said. “I had a busy schedule and always found time to exercise and take care of myself.”

You can purchase Partridge’s book on Amazon today.

“If you have the means to start your dreams, then start, even if you start on a smaller level than you envision it,” Partridge said.

Partridge is now over seven years into her successful business that started on a rainy Monday in 2015.

“People think their dreams are wild, but at the end of the day they aren’t that wild,” Partridge said. “Usually, they are just missing steps one through nine to get to step 10.”

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Meghann Greenhill
Profile Story
4 December 2022



Tess Partridge, owner of iStroll LLC. Photo owned by Tess Partridge



Tess Partridge arrives at an iStroll fitness class in Kentucky with her son. Children are welcome at all workout classes. Photo owned by Tess Partridge



Parents are completing their workout alongside their kids. The iStroll community is a social network for parents and children. Photo by Tess Partridge