

# STYLE

COVERING THE ARTS AND LOCAL FEATURES



Photograph by Robinson Kuntz

Client Rob Browning pushes his way through his workout under the watchful eye of Brenda Kashuba, the owner of 4EverFit. Browning, who had quadruple-bypass surgery when he was 42 years old, is just one of the many special clients that Kashuba works with at her studio in Saratoga.

## Since Kashuba got fit, she's helping others

4EverFit a lifestyle,  
not just a name

By BRIAN BABCOCK

**B**renda Kashuba's motto seems to read like the words of "The New Colossus" engraved on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor; Your huddled masses yearning to breath free."

Those words ring true for many of Kashuba's clients who are looking for ways to overcome their weight and exhaustion issues. After six years in Cupertino, Kashuba moved her 4EverFit per-

sonal training studio to Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road in Saratoga a month ago and looks to keep helping people make their lives healthier.

Kashuba has worked with a wide array of clients: from 10- and 11-year-old sisters to a 21-year-old autistic man to the average person just hoping to shed a few pounds and live a healthier lifestyle.

What makes her story unique and so helpful to her clients is that she has gone through her own trials, she said. Kashuba is deaf in her right ear and only has partial hearing in her left due to a hereditary rheumatic arthritic condition.

That condition hasn't been her only obstacle. She has also battled weight issues.

"I had lost and gained 50 pounds three times in my life by dieting," she said. "I just thought that I was going to find out what it takes to get rid of this weight once and for all and never gain it back again."

So she set off to become healthier, she said. She began eating right and working out to the point where it became a lifestyle for her, Kashuba said. It changed her life and energy level so much that she couldn't wait to help somebody else with their life.

"And that's where this all

began," Kashuba said, "at the age of 42. This part of my life is so much more rewarding than the first 42 years of my life. I'm fitter, happier."

Standing at 5-foot-3, Kashuba said she weighed in at 182 pounds, which is about 55 pounds heavier than the healthy weight for her height, doctors say. Although those days are a decade in the past, Kashuba still keeps a video of herself that was shot at her home in Lake Tahoe 11 years ago.

In the video, a heavier Kashuba can be seen resting her head in her hands as she sits over a kitchen

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Photograph by Robinson Kuntz

Both trainer Brenda Kashuba (left) and client Rob Browning are more fit now than they were when they were younger.

## Kashuba

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table. At one point in the video she looks into the camera and says, "I'm tired."

"And that was it; that was life," she said. "I was always tired."

Kashuba keeps the video around as inspiration for her clients who have down days where they think they can't ever reach their goals. She said if she could go through her metamorphosis, anyone could.

One client for whom she had to pull out the video was Vicky Henderson, a Saratoga resident who had heard about Kashuba through a friend. Henderson had hit a plateau and was beginning to wonder whether she wanted to keep working out with a trainer.

Then Kashuba showed her the video, and Henderson had an epiphany.

"When I saw that it really drove home for me that I could do this," said Henderson, who remarked at the time that Kashuba had been bigger than she was. "I thought if she could do it, I could, too."

"I just needed a kick in the butt," she added.

Henderson, who has been training at 4EverFit for close to a year, said she plans on staying for a while. When she first began

her training, Henderson thought she would lose a couple of pounds, learn some of the fundamentals of physical training and just do it herself. It would be cheaper that way.

After going through what she has, however, and seeing the personal touch that Kashuba brings to her work, she now has changed her mind and intends on staying with the studio for some time.

One client did quit on her at one point.

Rob Browning had a quadruple-bypass surgery when he was 42 years old. While recovering from the surgery his doctor told him he needed to change his way of life by eating better and exercising.

So Browning decided to join a gym. But while searching for a gym he came upon one huge problem: None of them wanted to take him. Due to his surgery, and as a diagnosed diabetic, Browning was looked at as a huge liability. Even the gyms that were willing to take him wanted excessive fees he couldn't afford.

But while walking in his neighborhood in Cupertino he came across the studio. He would pass by it every so often, but never really put much thought into joining until Kashuba ran outside to introduce herself one day.

He told her he would think about joining but wasn't sure, he said. So for Father's Day four

years ago his family bought him some passes, and he has undergone a complete transformation. Browning has lost 50 pounds now and has his diabetes under control.

"After working out with Brenda, there is nothing I'm afraid of. I've even been talking to the guys at work about skydiving," said the 48-year-old, who said he will be healthier at age 50 than he was when he was in his 20s.

"You have no idea what it's like to go from being the fat guy that everyone goes running to help to the guy that everyone comes looking for for help," he said.

Despite all the amazing stories there is a black cloud that hangs over the studio. Although the training facility has a very solid and loyal base of clients, it barely has enough income to break even.

"People ask me how's business and I tell them, 'Great. Overhead sucks, though,'" Kashuba said.

To help keep the studio open, many of her clients have pitched in to help Kashuba out with the costs of running the training facility. When she moved the studio to Saratoga about a month ago, Browning, an IT manager for Ricoh Electronics, Inc., set up her computer system.

"I asked him if I could pay him, and he said no," Kashuba said. "He told me he just needs me to stay open."