

Strong Body, Strong Mind, Strong Faith

In the fall of 2014, Rachel Bilski, having recently graduated eighth grade at ASA, headed to West Catholic for the next leg of her academic journey. Throughout her four years there, she enjoyed art class and yearbook, played softball each spring, and joined the Pro Life group in time to participate in the March for Life movement in D.C.



All was well. Senior year was wrapping up. It was time to decide where to head next.

Knowing earning an Associate Degree in General Education was a flexible path with transferable skills, she decided on Grand Rapids Community College. As she tackled her classes, the fervor she experienced in high school for health and wellness began to grow. Staying active and eating well had changed Rachel's life for the better... mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Was it time to take that passion and do something new with it?

It was. Rachel recalled, "In high school, when I took my health more seriously, I experienced a clearer mind, my body felt stronger, and I noticed I was able to perform daily tasks with no complications. My confidence grew. Eating healthy and exercising was not only good for my physical body, but it also has a drastic, positive impact on my emotions and mental well-being. Knowing that I was taking care of God's temple, the one and only body I'm given, had even improved my relationship with Him."

Along with the Associate Degree,

Rachel became certified as a Personal Trainer and Nutrition Coach through National Academy of Sports Medicine.

"Encouraging individuals who may feel overwhelmed or stuck within their fitness journey and helping them create a healthy lifestyle that was sustainable long-term became a goal of mine."

She continued, "Fitness education is important. Not only can movement improve your physical

performance or even change your body composition, it also improves your mental health. What I like to tell people is movement, even something simple like waving your arms around, is a serotonin boost for your body — it's the happy hormone. Movement doesn't have to be in the gym, it can include doing chores around the house, stretching, or even going on a walk. Our bodies were created to move, and when we move, we become happy individuals."

When asked what she felt people needed to better understand about nutrition, the answer was easy. "Nutrition is what makes up 70% of your health. What you put into your body can influence the way we think, act, and feel. What I try to emphasize to people is, to focus on the quality of the food, rather than hyperfocusing on the quantity. Yes, knowing how many calories you're consuming is important when it comes to weight loss/gain, but there's always been a negative connotation on "calories." Calories are energy, and our bodies

need energy to complete daily tasks, or to even use our brains to think, that requires energy. What you choose as your energy source for the body is highly important. Consuming your vegetables and fruits daily can enhance brain function, performance levels, and can overall make you feel better. Eating high-quality foods that support your organs can improve your longevity and how you age. Don't underestimate the power of broccoli!"

The proudest moments Rachel experiences while working with patrons is simply motivating people to keep coming back. She will never forget an elderly client who was experiencing several health issues including a fractured shoulder, muscle imbalances, cognitive issues due to CO2 exposure, balance difficulties, and obesity. Rachel knew the lifestyle changes she was asking this client to make were anything but easy, yet this client continued to show up for herself to improve her overall well-being." Working with me, she not only lost weight, but she also gained strength and significantly improved her flexibility and balance. She expressed how she'd never had a trainer who



worked so in-depthly with her before, and she was able to witness such positive results for herself and accomplish the things she thought she could never do."

Rachel's advice for anyone who

chooses to make a change in their health for the better? "My advice? Simple. Just show up."