

## Power in the Punch

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From the minute Kimberlee White put on a pair of boxing gloves, she felt empowered.

Hitting the speedbag with her friends by her side was fun and exciting. But being in the predominantly male boxing room made her feel out-of-place and intimidated.

That's when the idea of Jabz Boxing, an all-women boxing circuit gym, came to be. And with the help

of her business partner, Len Hayko, her thought became a reality in 2012.

Starting from scratch, the first Jabz location was small and hidden away in a warehouse in Arizona. It had a boxing ring, a few dumbbells, heavy bags, carpeted floors and no air conditioning.

"We were hidden in this tiny little airpark — no signage, literally nothing," recalled White. "We just started inviting people there and we put some stuff up on social media. People were asking more questions."

One lady would bring three friends with her the next time she came in to workout, and before White and Hayko knew it, they had 50 members and began looking for their first retail location. A community was starting to grow.

In 2013, Jabz sold its first franchise. Today, Jabz has 24 locations and has expanded to the East Coast. "It's been really fun," said White. "I feel like I live, eat, sleep and breathe Jabz, and I wouldn't have it any other way."

However, the creation of Jabz wasn't without its challenges.

"Having a dream is great, but when you really don't have money or any capital, it always serves as a problem," said White. Both Hayko and White had to tell themselves to start small and let the business grow.

For White, this was difficult. At the time, she was a teacher with no business experience. "I was very intimidated about teaching these other women to be strong," she said. "Even though I felt pretty confident, this was a different stage for me. I think making that leap from being in a classroom to now in a gym working with adults and not children — that was a little bit intimidating for me, but I realized Jabz is actually just a great big classroom."

White is helping teach girls as young as eight in her Jabz Junior program, and as old as 78 in her normal classes, how to pack a punch. She describes Jabz as a high-energy workout where everyone sees results through strength training, cardio, and of course, boxing — with women throwing over 1,000 punches in a class.

Jabz is more than just a gym, it's a community.

“We have a woman in one of our new locations who is a domestic abuse survivor,” said White. “And we thought it would be great to do a yoga donation event to highlight the organization that really helped her through her rough time. We are a very community-oriented gym.”

In White's view, that strong community bond is what separates Jabz from any other gym — female or co-ed.