

# Converting pounds into dollars

**FitOne embraces reality show competition**

BY MELISSA QUINN

Just in time for the holiday season, more than 50 Alexandrians took FitOne's Ultimate Weight Loss Challenge, working out and eating right for six weeks in hopes of securing the local fitness studio's cash prize.

After the final weigh-in, the results were tallied up: The contestants lost a combined 288 pounds — shedding about 48 pounds each week of the competition.

First place and \$2,500 went to Will Jog For Fries, a team consisting of four women and a lone man. Together, the group lost 5.8 percent of their total body weight and more than 50 pounds — more than 10 pounds per person.

NBC's "The Biggest Loser"

er" partially inspired the challenge, said Jill Stump, who is a co-owner of the 800 block N. St. Asaph St. fitness studio with Caity Davis.

A studio in San Diego had created a contest based loosely on the reality television show and decided to market the equipment necessary for the contest to gyms across the country. The idea caught Davis and Stump's eyes, and together they crafted the program to fit their studio. They launched the Ultimate Weight Loss Challenge in 2011 and created an instant hit.

"Our excitement was just getting people introduced to exercise," Stump said. "Any time we have people doing something positive for their body is exciting."

Thirteen teams registered in the competition's first iteration. The team that collective-

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Jen McDonald, AJ Johns, Sandra Parker and Amanda Darnley of Will Jog For Fries lost more than 50 pounds and took first place in FitOne's Ultimate Weight Loss Challenge.

## BIGGEST LOSER

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ly lost the greatest percentage of body weight walked away with \$500 per member.

This year, 11 squads made it through the six-week challenge. Each five-person team required at least two competitors who were not FitOne members, and the squads were encouraged to exercise anywhere — whether going for a run around the block or taking fitness classes at the studio.

When the contest began October 6, each contestant stepped onto the scale to document their initial weight. A second weigh-

in was scheduled halfway through the weeks-long contest, with prizes given to the top male and female losers. Stump and Davis held the final weigh-in just before the November 17 deadline.

If a team member missed a weigh-in, their whole group was disqualified.

To motivate the competitors, Stump and Davis sent weekly emails with nutrition tips and studio offers, such as nutrition services.

Second place this year went to the Shrinking Globetrotters. The team lost 5.4 percent of their total weight and 45.6 pounds. And rounding out the top three

was Hey, I Think There Might Be Something Under There, who lost 4 percent of their total weight and 40 pounds.

But it's not just about winning a cash prize. Davis and Stump hope their contestants' weight-loss experience will encourage them to stay in shape throughout the holidays — especially since the time between Thanksgiving and New Year's is when many put on a few pounds.

"People like the idea of getting motivated for fall and ready for the holidays," Stump said. "You don't want to feel like you're letting other people down."