

Dear Parents....

Did you know that we offer more than gymnastics classes? Oh yes... we offer so much more! But today we don't want to talk about the workshops, team training, or parties.

Nope.

Because there's something hanging out in this separate area snuggled between the team room and west gym some people don't know about.

The Aerial Gym!

6 sets of beautiful, brightly colored silks drape down from the towering ceiling, just waiting for your kid to grab one and go for a climb. Aerial hoops, or 'Lyras', lean against the wall waiting their turn. And our incredible coach, Courtney, is probably waiting for them too.

She's one of 4 coaches here at Metro's Aerial gym, and her cheerful, can-do attitude is infectious. Her love for aerial spills over and the students eat it up.

If you ask what her favorite part of coaching is, she'll probably tell you that it's seeing a student overcome that 'thing' that's been frustrating them... finally mastering a skill they've struggled with. "I fell in love with it," she says. "And I enjoy seeing someone else fall in love with this craft."

She loves seeing it happen for them because she remembers her own journey. When she first started out she had no idea it would become a way of life. A brand-new mom looking for a fun way to "trick herself into working out" found a new passion instead. Now, 11 years later, she coaches, performs, attends further education camps, and travels to meets both as a coach and competitor.

Watching her with her students, you can see the dedication to her craft. She walks through the next practice routine verbally first, teaching them to visualize the moves. If there's confusion, out comes the doll, a fun way to demonstrate in slow motion. And of course there's the first-person demo where you get to see Courtney climb the silks and explain the process as she goes.

The "**Introduction to Aerial Silks**" class lays a foundation of solid communication between coach and student, minimizing confusion on terminology and procedures. Safety is learned. Strength is built. The students spend 3 months at this level before proceeding.

In "**Beginning Aerial Silks**", students begin putting their strength to work and learn moves at a safe height. They'll figure out how to climb, and how to safely descend. The focus is on mastering the basics to maintain safety and precision as they move forward and expand their skill set.

When they're ready to move on to "**Intermediate Aerial Silks**" they'll be ready to climb higher and master more complicated moves. They'll combine multiple moves into routines. Drops will be taught and they'll have the chance to decide if they want to compete!

Competitions have continued through the pandemic, but with the added benefit of offering a virtual option. Performances can be live-streamed in our own studio instead of traveling, cutting down on costs associated with competing.

Who is Aerial for?

Courtney says it's for *anyone who wants it*. "You don't need upper body strength. You don't need core strength. What you need is a willingness to try and a good attitude. We don't need anything but you and a water bottle to come in for a class. We work on everything else."

She tells a story of a 70 year old woman who came into Metro Aerial for her first class, eager to try something she'd never done before. "She went on to compete!" she remembers. "It was awesome."

"The real skill is not comparing yourself to others," she adds. "Instead, you need to compare yourself to yourself. Always ask, 'How did I do today compared to the last time?'"

Our silks gym is used for classes for youth ages 7 and up. And if you bring your child in, see that first class, and think it's something you'd love for yourself? Well, we offer adult classes on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings!

We can't wait to see you there!