

Time might be running out to fly with Zenitry Aerial Silks

The fate of an Elon yoga studio remains a mystery for those who call it home

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Within walking distance of Elon University's campus, you'll find colorful silks hanging from the ceiling, as well as people hanging from them.

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Zenitry offers yoga, barre and aerial silks to the Elon and Burlington area.

But that could all go away soon. Zenitry, a yoga, barre and aerial silks studio, has become not only a place to workout, but also a community for many in the Elon and Burlington area.

Recently, members of the Zenitry family received news that the owner of the studio is stepping down in order to care for her newborn baby, and if a replacement is not found soon, the studio will close by the end of May.

Michelle Spurlock, the aerial silks program director, moved to Elon about two years ago, when her husband was offered a job at Elon in the computer science department. Spurlock used to work in higher education herself, but decided it was aerial silks and yoga that was her true passion, and started teaching full-time at Zenitry.

When Spurlock learned about the potential of the studio closing down, she said while it was difficult to think



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about losing such an amazing space, she assured her students she will never stop teaching, and that there will always be a place to soar in Elon.

"We want to stay, but if we have to move, we will find a barn, or a warehouse, and we will hang from the ceiling. We will do whatever we have to do. People who do aerial get a little fanatic about it," Spurlock said.

Growing up, she was always "the kid on the sidelines," because of severe exercise-induced asthma, which often left her excluded from sports or any form of physical activity. It was when she discovered yoga and

aerial silks for the first time that her life changed — both physically and mentally.

The practice of yoga is what she said "really started getting me stronger in terms of my lungs, but also my body." After several years of practicing yoga, she discovered aerial silks, and took her yoga practice "way up with it."

"I was like, 'Wow, now I'm going to get really strong and gain power and strength that I have never known before,'" Spurlock said.

The strength that took over her body when she first tried silks has

played an instrumental role in her life ever since, making her refuse to stop teaching and growing the aerial silks community, despite the given circumstances. While she is sure she will never stop teaching, she said, "the space [Zenitry Studio] is just amazing" and losing it would be a great loss to the community.

"It's just the perfect space. It's just the perfect location for this type of thing. We are really hoping to stay here. We've built our home here," Spurlock said.

Clarissa Whitmeir and Nicole Murray are students of Spurlock's,

who — like their instructor — have seen changes in their everyday life, because of what they've learned through aerial silks. Whitmeir says she feels stronger than she has ever felt before.

"It's been a little bit of a journey to find more confidence in myself and build strength and just trusting my body more. I struggled growing up with confidence, so I've looked for things my whole life to kind of make me feel empowered, and this has really done that for me," Whitmeir said.

For Murray, when she saw the silks for the first time, she immediately wanted to get on them and was told she was a natural.

"I was like, 'I don't know about that, do I have the money to?' They got me in here and it's absolutely amazing. I went from a little girl seeing Cher in concert — that's when I first saw the silks — to now, when I'm actually doing it," Murray said.

Spurlock says there is something about aerial silks that builds community and confidence around everyone cheering each other on and supporting each other when trying to master new skills, while challenging yourself, both physically and mentally.

"The fact of what you are doing is risky. This is definitely risky and not your average workout. You are in the air and learning acrobatic tricks in the air, and it's fairly vigorous, and it's hard," Spurlock said.

While the fate of Zenitry remains a mystery, the passion for aerial silks for members of this community will never come into question.

#ContestMovieLife



Senior Jacob Major stars in Elon's commercial in the Regal Cinemas and Coca-Cola film competition.

Elon students have the chance to win the Fan Favorite award, as measured by the #ContestMovieLife

Alex Roat

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The hashtag #ContestMovieLife has dominated social media around Elon University over the past few months in support of a commercial shot for Coca-Cola and Regal Cinemas.

Filmed by Elon students, alumni and professionals, in association with the 2018 Coca-Cola and Regal Films competition, the 35-second commercial entitled "Movie Life" highlights the importance of popcorn and Coca-Cola in a moviegoer's experience.

Elon was chosen as one of five universities, out of 29 film schools around the country, such as University of California, Los Angeles and Ithaca, to compete and receive \$15,000 to shoot the commercial.

Written by sophomore Patrick Wei and co-produced by seniors Hunter Strauch and Katie Shannon, the commercial was shot over a period of 12 hours in a Regal Cinemas movie theater in Atlanta at the end of January.

"Working for Regal and Coca-Cola was a once in a lifetime opportunity," Strauch said. "It allowed me and my crew members to work in a professional environment with one of the largest brands in the world. Some filmmakers spend 10 or more years of their career waiting for an opportunity like that."

Though the Elon team is not one of the top two finalists, the group is still eligible to win the Fan Favorite award.

The winner of the Fan Favorite award, as measured by the #ContestMovieLife hashtag on social media, will receive a RED camera for their university. When tweeted from a public Twitter account, the hashtag will be counted once per day, and if the video is shared, the voter can enter for a chance to win Regal Movie tickets for a year.

"It's been amazing seeing the support from fellow Elon students so far, so let's keep it going in the last week of voting," Shannon said. To celebrate the last days of voting, Elon's Coca-Cola and Regal Cinemas team added the tweet #RaffleMovieLife, giving voters the chance to win a gift card to The Oak House.

The voting period ends on April 20 and results will be announced the following week at the CinemaCon conference.

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