

A Passion, A Journey, A Dream

By: Sheila Stover

"Dreams really do come true", says Sharon Cunningham who completed her first Fitness video. The title of the video is "U-FIT CARDIO BLAST", and it is a blast. The video is composed of a high-low impact workout, with its focus on fitness with an attitude. Cunningham says, "the video provides three things for users— fun while getting fit and stronger, increase of energy level and burn off calories, and it can improve the stress in your daily life". Her project had its birth about ten years ago and has finally happened.

According to Cunningham, she put off the project because she wanted to finance it herself.

It was on the back burner for a while, she did not give up the faith. She sold tee-shirts at her family reunions and to her friends, which provided the "start-up" funds for her project. Many of her friends and associates encouraged her dream to include Mo and Linda, who are in the video. Her desire was to design a fitness program on video which would be fun, safe and adaptable so that anyone could participate.

Time began to tick away—so she thought. Weeks turned into months and months turned in years and still no video. Her project was still just a dream. She ran into an associate who reminded her that she needed to have a video on the market, he believed it was time for her to do it. He was unaware that she had already shot five demos that she was not pleased with. Her displeasure surfaced because she found



Sharon Cunningham

teaching in front of a camera was very different from teaching an actual class. Her good friend and fitness guru who worked for a television station suggested that she go on CAT TV to get comfortable with the camera. With his suggestion, came the birth of U-Fit. She became more committed, but still did not have a clue as to how it could be done. She thought that money was the problem. However, she found that original music was the largest culprit and credits Joe Daniels, a local musician, for writing the music for the video. Everyone she asked to help with her dream said, "Yes". This really motivated her. Cunningham thought about it, and then prayed about it. Her determination soared, and she said, "I can do this, and I will do it with patience, perspiration, and determination". Cunningham took a leap of faith, believed in God, and now has completed, "U-FIT CARDIO BLAST".

Cunningham states, "I have been blessed with a praying, bible teaching Pastor and his wife, (Reverend and Mrs. Donald Jerkins), who have always believed in me. I have also been blessed with a giving brother-in-law who saw my vision and provided the financial support to have the video duplicated."

The video sales for \$21.95, and is dedicated to the memory of two of her close friends, who died of cancer, Joyce Elem and Sandra Douglas. According to Cunningham "they put on the armor of God in their fight against cancer". Cunningham was moved by their strength while they went through their battle. She will give a portion of the proceeds in honor of them to cancer research. With this video, she wants to reach more people and get them involved in exercise programs.

Cunningham states, "I've always had the support of my son Jarrett who gave me the freedom to dream. He has always been there for me and sometimes had to remind me of what I have instilled in him— to trust the Lord and do the best you can "According to Cunningham, "Jarrett was a toddler when I started in this business, and is now 20 years old. He's an awesome young man; I am very proud of him. Not only has my son been there for me, but my grandmother has always been there for me. I grew up in her home, and being reared by a "no-nonsense", spiritually filled, grandmother, proved to me that success is not based upon where a person lives or how much education a person has. She was truly a woman of faith (she's been in heaven for sometime now). I cannot go without saying that my mother's guidance helped me tremendously, especially since my father died when I was fifteen years old. She reared three girls to be independent, ambitious, and self-sufficient. We were taught that an education was power and no one could take that away from us. It was her education as a teacher that was our saving grace. It helped her to support us. It was clear early on in life, that no matter what we had to go through, my sister and I would go to college and graduate. We did because we did not have another choice. My mom did not play. Unlike most kids, who would hear, "I'm going to tell your father when he gets home", we heard from our Dad, "I'm going to tell your mom when she gets home." She was a certified teacher in Special Education for forty years. She retired in 1998. I am so grateful to her that she made us except the challenge of a higher education. Make no mistake, I know I owe honor to the father above first and my grandma who was not an educated woman, but was a woman who put all of her trust in God.

As the mother of one son and a flight attendant, Cunningham has always had a very intense schedule which requires a lot of discipline. No matter how full her schedule has been, she has maintained a place for fitness in her life. An enthusiast in the health care fitness field for 15 years, Cunningham holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Health and Physical Education. She is certified by the Aerobics and Fitness Association of America, and the Institute for Aerobics Research. Cunningham has conducted popular exercise workshops throughout the city. Not only that, she has hosted and produced the "U-FIT" television show for CAT TV. Cunningham, a woman of faith, who decided that the only way to make something happen is to do it, now believes more strongly than ever that to be successful is determined by believing in God, taking that leap of faith, and putting a plan into action.

More recently, Cunningham has partnered with Katina Rice, who is a Pharmacist and Diabetes Education Specialist. They operate Unique Fitness Exercise and Training, which specializes in: uplifting exercise programs, health education, and exercise leader certification. Currently, they are offering "Dance-Fit-Praise" exercise classes at the United Tae Kwon Do Academy. **Call (336) 747-0015 for information on fitness classes or for information on starting a fitness program for your organization.**

Piney Grove Baptist Church

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9:30 am

Sunday School

11:00 am

Morning Worship Service



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