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# Former CU Athletics Trainer Opens ARC Athletics in Manhattanville

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Columbia students and community members now have another fitness option when Dodge is packed and waits for machines are hours long.

On June 1, Gene Schafer, a former Columbia athletics trainer, and his wife, Jane King, a former CNN reporter, opened Active Rehabilitation and Conditioning Athletics in Manhattanville, on 131st Street near 12th Avenue.

Schafer and King said they saw a need for a fitness facility in the area. As Schafer explained, both he and his wife are in their mid-30s and were "at a point in our lives where we're ready to take a risk." So, after finding an available location and conferring with his colleagues at Columbia, Schafer quit his job at the University, and the couple went ahead with their plan.

Schafer affirmed that he left Columbia on good terms and that his former co-workers were "very supportive and helpful."

Both Schafer and King said that they are pleased with their decision and their success thus far. "So far, so good," Schafer said. He added that the fitness center has been well received in the neighborhood, and that it has attracted not only Manhattanville locals, but also businessmen and women working in the area, many of whom found the center using Citysearch and Google.

Andrea Klann, a psychoanalyst who regularly works out at ARC, said that it was "absolutely a godsend to me to be able to walk to the gym."

Many of Schafer's clients stop in to exercise mid-workday. Elaine Sun, 38, who works at an architecture firm a floor below ARC Athletics, uses the fitness facility approximately twice a week, even though her firm has its own workout room. "It's very convenient," she said. "The personalized training is fantastic." According to Sun, Schafer "does exactly what I ask him to focus on," and "he never tries to market anything."

Although ARC is relatively small, and competitors in the area include a Lucille Roberts and a New York Sports Club on 125th Street, Schafer believes that his experience is what attracts many people to the facility. Schafer is a certified athletic trainer and a certified strength conditioning specialist with a strong background in sports medicine.

Marvin Middleton, one of his ARC clients, claims that Schafer "is a guy who knows what he's doing."

Middleton, 51, said that he prefers ARC over NYSC because he likes the personal attention he receives and likes the fact that there is somebody to push him. "Gene takes me to another level," said Middleton, who works for the New York City Transit and returned from Iraq six months ago. Middleton said that he had recently gained some weight, and that he and Schafer have worked together to create a program to reach his goals.

Other customers also said that they like working out at ARC because it is rarely crowded, as most people come in by appointment.

ARC offers cardio equipment, free-weights, resistance bands, and exercise balls. While there are no weight machines, Schafer said that he believes that resistance bands are better for muscle building. The couple also said that they will consider offering classes such as kick-boxing, pilates, and aerobics if customers begin to make requests, and Schafer has considered adding more trainers and a physical therapist.

While Schafer said that he is pleased with his decision to leave Columbia and open ARC Athletics, he also said that he misses Columbia and "the camaraderie of coaches and student athletes" he enjoyed during his "five wonderful years at Columbia" teaching physical fitness and working with the men's basketball, women's volleyball, and track teams.

Luckily, Schafer said, he and his wife don't live far from Columbia and still plan to attend Columbia football games whenever they can.