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Oakland University alums pursue passion for exercise, fitness with new facility

After opening locations in Ann Arbor and Plymouth, **Applied Fitness Solutions** co-owner and **Oakland University** graduate Jared Freeman recently returned to his roots – along with fellow OU alum and AFS Founder Michael Stack – to establish a new 17,000 square-foot facility in Rochester Hills.

*UPDATE: Online business and inspirational resource Entrepreneur.com ranks Applied Fitness Solutions as the 10th in the nation for company cultures in the small business category for 2017. **See the list.***

"I've always loved the Rochester area, so to be able to come home and bring AFS to this community that I love, I feel really lucky," Freeman said.

A 2008 graduate of Oakland University, Freeman met Stack in the fall of 2007 when he was finishing up his undergraduate degree in **exercise science**. At the time, Stack was a graduate assistant who was teaching a class that Freeman attended.

"I had a lot of students who performed well, but Jared was one of those that you could tell truly wanted to be there," Stack said. "It didn't seem like he was in it to get an 'A' in the class, it seemed like he genuinely wanted to learn it and do something with it."

Six months later, Freeman had graduated and was working at a local personal training studio when he saw a job posting for Applied Fitness Solutions that caught his eye.

"As soon as I realized it was Mike's gym, I said to myself that I at least had to go see what it was all about," Freeman said.

Nine years later, what started as a small niche concept in Ann Arbor with two employees – Stack and Freeman – has blossomed into a thriving facility fitness chain serving thousands of clients in the Ann Arbor, Plymouth, and now Rochester communities.

"If you talk with our clients, I think many would tell you that they've remained with us over the years because of the strong community we've created," Freeman said. "There's just a certain feeling you have when you belong somewhere. You're comfortable being yourself, you feel valued, and you look forward to being there. I can honestly say I had those feelings about Oakland University when I transferred there in my sophomore year. The authentic environment I found myself in at OU taught me a lot about how I wanted to lead when I someday had that chance."

At AFS, clients attend a few group exercise classes per week, and they have their own trainer coaching them on their lifestyle choices outside of the gym.

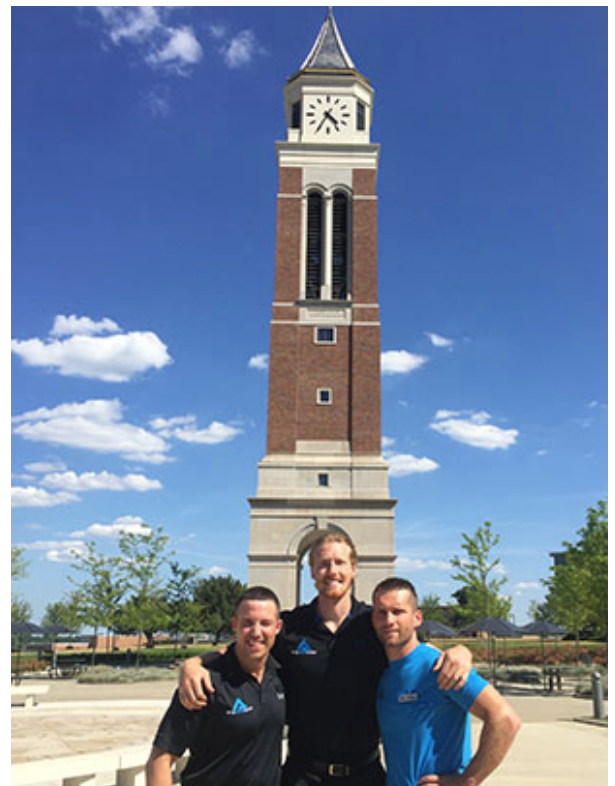
"I think AFS classes are phenomenal," Freeman said. "They're fun, they're scalable, they're convenient, but our secret sauce always comes back to the relationships. When you know someone is counting on you to show up, you show up."

AFS also recently introduced their own proprietary software that allows clients to send updates to their trainer, track their progress, schedule classes, and access educational content. It's this extra connection with clients that Stack attributes most of AFS' success.

"When I was doing personal training I became sort of known for giving my clients a lot of behind the scenes support," Stack said. "I'd grade their food logs, write them workouts they could do at home, call them throughout the week to check in, I'd basically just stay more involved than what was expected."



AFS Marketing Director Nate Langley, Managing Partner Jared Freeman, and Founder Michael Stack pose with "The Grizz" at Oakland University. (Photo courtesy AFS)



training, so I created sort of a hybrid between group classes and one on one coaching.”

Applied Fitness Solutions is located at 1136 Rochester Road, behind Dick’s Sporting Goods. For more information, visit 4afsf.it.com.

*AFS Founder Michael Stack, Marketing Director Nate Langley, and Managing Partner Jared Freeman in front of Elliott Tower.
(Photo courtesy AFS)*