

The Record (Sherbrooke)

Community gets net-twerking

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This past Sunday, community members gathered at Bishop's University for Twerk for a Cause, an event that incorporated physical health, women's support, and raised money for several important causes. Organizer and founder of Clozet Freak Inc. Svetlana Chernienko spoke to the Record about raising awareness for cancer, and domestic abuse, kicking off her international fitness tour that she will be embarking on in November.

Participants engaged in fitness sessions organized by Chernienko, in a setting that was by women, for women. It was the first stop for the group, and a trial for the event that she hopes to take around the world.

Chernienko launched her company Clozet Freak Inc. in 2014, focusing primarily on cosmetics. She created the fitness division Net-Twerking when one of her friends was diagnosed with breast cancer. She shaved her own head in support of her friend, but knew that was not all she was going to do. "From there I wanted to do something else, something more," she said.

Chernienko already had an idea in mind. "We were talking about it this summer," Chernienko explained about the concept of a university fitness tour, but when she received the call from her friend, she said that she told her coworkers, "You know what, lets just start it now."

All that was left was to pick an exercise. She chose twerking. "Twerking is pretty controversial," she admitted, but explained that the overly sexualized version of the dance in today's society is far from the origins of the dance style. "That's not what it's about," she added.

The roots of twerking, according to Chernienko, come from several African tribes who use it in their ritual dances. "I'm trying to educate women where the movements, the dance came from," she explained. It is also an amazing workout. According to Chernienko, one hour of twerking can burn approximately 1,000 calories.

Bishop's is the first stop on the international tour Chernienko is undertaking. They will be travelling to universities in the United States of America, like Harvard, Yale, UCLA, and Georgetown, as well as schools in Europe. At each stop they will be promoting awareness and raising funds for breast cancer and domestic abuse charities.

When asked why Bishop's was the choice for the first stop, Chernienko cited the close to home factor, as well as the school's strong stance on sexual assault. It goes hand in hand with Chernienko's goals and the charity they are supporting, Women Aware. "They work directly with domestic abuse survivors," she explained, adding

that they also worked with sexual assault survivors. "It's such a horrible thing to have to go through."

Chernienko's event also had women from a shelter participate, something she said was very important in terms of helping them move forward with their lives. Ultimately, while raising awareness, she wanted to provide a space where women felt safe and supported. "As women we tend to forget ourselves," the mother of four explained, adding, "I just want to get women together for a good cause."

The event at Bishop's, and the events in the future, will hopefully, "make these women feel a part of something again," Chernienko said. "There is nothing more powerful than groups of women coming together." For the next few months, Chernienko will be constantly bringing women together, to raise awareness and money for these worthy causes, all while doing a little dance.

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