



Shannen Park does the “flag pose solo” at The Studio Martial Arts on the edge of Granite Bay and Roseville.

GRANITE BAY NINJA WARRIOR

BY SCOTT NOBLE • PHOTOS BY ANNA WICK

Shannen Park is a busy lady. She is a mom, restaurateur, martial artist and, as of this year, an American Ninja Warrior Contestant. Park trains at The Studio Martial Arts and Fitness with Master Amitis Pourarian, who owns and operates the Roseville center located near Granite Bay on Sierra College Boulevard. Park discovered the Studio a little over two years ago when she wanted to resume her martial arts training.

“I took Taekwondo until I was fifteen, and as the years passed I realized how much I missed it,” Park recalled. She added that she really wanted to find an activity for her family of four. Taekwondo was a great fit for them. As it turns out, Park’s husband Tony needed a little convincing. According to Pourarian, once Tony was in he “just took off.”

“Tony came with an open mind and now he is a great athlete, and his transformation has been remarkable,” the martial arts master observed.

Park said her 4-year-old and 7-year-old are also thriving. She’s been happy to share the family element of martial arts training with her loved ones. But Park also enjoys a challenge – a mentality of desire that led her to eventually try out for American Ninja Warrior. Initially, she was searching for a program to augment her martial arts training and she found one in the form of Pourarian’s brain child: The Ninja Progressive Program — based upon the obstacles used on the television show.

“I built the course with the elements of the show in mind,” Pourarian acknowledged.

The course for the challenge consists of monkey bars, rock-climbing walls and peg

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Shannen Park, American Ninja Warrior Contestant

boards, just to name a few, and each station is designed to push the limits of strength, agility and endurance. Pourarian said Park took to the course well and after 6 months of training the idea of trying out for the show came up. At first, Park was not so sure. After some research the idea took flight.

“Amitis told me to I should try out, so I watched the show and when I saw a woman my size (5-foot tall, 100 pound Kacy Catanzaro) actually completed the course, I was sold,” Park remembered.

Pourarian stressed that Park’s work ethic and drive to learn are what sets her apart from many would-be competitors.

“She has this desire to learn and master anything I put in front of her,” the instructor explained, “and after a few months of training, I felt she had a chance at the show.”

In order to be considered for the television adventure applicants must submit a video showcasing their skill on Ninja-style courses. A limited number are selected for regional competition. Those who make it through the area competition move on to the finals in Las Vegas for a chance at \$1 million and, of course, the title of American Ninja Warrior. Park was one of 600 selected to compete at regionals from a pool of 50,000.

“I started the class for fun and the next thing I know, I am standing at the Venice Beach regional competition,” Park said.



Although she did not move on to the national level, Park did achieve the goal of making the show. She intends to continue her training and has set her sights higher for next year.

“This year, I made the show, but in 2016, I have my eye on Las Vegas,” she confirmed.

For Pourarian’s martial arts studio, helping Park prepare for next year has become a team effort.



With help from her teacher, Master Amitis Pourarian, Shannen Park pushes the limits.

“We are supplementing the regular training classes with work in any area Shannen may need to work on,” Pourarain said. “If it is explosiveness, the class works on it as a whole, if it is upper body endurance, then the group will focus on that area as well.”

Selections for next year’s Ninja Warrior will be announced in February. Until Park gets a shot at making the finals, she will continue

to juggle family life, training, operating the Rivers Edge Café and just being a self-described “Ninja Mom”. Anyone interested in following her journey to next year’s competition can do so online at shannenpark.com. To find out more about the fitness and martial arts programs offered by Master Pourarian and her team, you can go to trainatthestudio.com.