

Double Dutch team teaches Seattle the ropes

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By KATHERINE SATHER / KING 5 News



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Members include (left to right)
Vanessa Krenz, Jen Bay, Andrea
Gardner and Amy Trefsgger.

SEATTLE - For Andrea Gardner and her friends, it's not how high you can jump.

It's how fast, how funky and with how much style.

As members of Seattle's all-women, adult "theatrical" Double Dutch team, they aim to dazzle and inspire both kids and adults to skip rope.

The four women – all in their late 20s or early 30s – are know as "On the Double." They perform at music festivals, Rat City Rollergirls events, and most recently – an all-women's arm-wrestling tournament in Ballard, where they drew a crowd outside the Tin Hat Pub.

Dressed in matching camouflage, they did flips and tricks for onlookers.

By the end, they had even the boys with beer-bellies begging to try Double Dutch.

"We perform as much as we can," said member Jen Bay. "Almost every time we perform, we try and teach people how to jump. Encourage them to give it a shot."

Bay works for King County. Other members of the group include social worker Amy Trefsgger, bar manager Vanessa Krenz, and Gardner, a nanny. They each work 9-to-5.

When the women first started, they couldn't find the right length of jump ropes at any Seattle store

So they used telephone cords.

The intense exercise is one reason they jump – often three times a week. But they say it's also a good time. They've performed as cowgirls and super heroes, and are currently putting together a space theme with silver costumes and David Bowie music.

"We wanted to do something active and fun," Gardner said.

The team has rotated members over the years, and only two original members remain. They were originally inspired by a San Francisco adult Double Dutch team called Double Duchess.

Other than that, they say adult teams are scant – particularly on the west coast.

But Double Dutch has gained increasing popularity with tweens, especially with the release of "Jump In," a Disney film that was released this spring.

"I think it's seeing a bit of a resurgence of popularity right now," Gardner said.

They recently finished teaching Double Dutch classes at Montlake Community Center, which they say was popular and rewarding. They'll probably do it again.

Finally, the group travels to New York City every year for the Double Dutch Holiday classic, an event sponsored by the National Double Dutch League that brings teams from all over the world to compete.

They don't compete at the Classic, but they're gaining popularity in Seattle, where they're invited to perform at numerous functions.

"None of us Double-Dutched as kids - none of us have kids," said Bay. "We're just kidding doing this for fun, and want to get kids involved."