



## **Everybody Loses (and Wins!) at Gabriele Fitness and Performance; Berkeley Heights Gym Sponsors "Biggest Loser" Weight Loss Contest**

**By Josh Shreckengost**  
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BERKELEY HEIGHTS, NJ - Before the surging popularity of the hit television show of the same name, not too many people would smile at being called "The Biggest Loser." But the fact of the matter is, the television show of the same name serves to inspire and push millions of Americans to reach their weight loss goals. However, most folks out there buy into the common misconception that shedding many pounds is healthy and good for you to do when most of the time, just the opposite is true.

Enter Vince Gabriele, Tom Langton, Joe Hartigan, Andrew White, Michele Diggle and the rest of the staff at

Berkeley Heights' Gabriele Fitness and Performance on Locust Avenue. These dedicated fitness professionals hatched a plan this past May to teach the gym's members and interested members of the community how to lose weight the right way, that is to lose body fat and build muscle instead of just shedding pounds.

"We didn't want to do the Biggest Loser just in terms of weight loss because if we did that, people would just stop eating and do a lot of cardio [for 50 days]," said head trainer Tom Langton. "That's not a healthy way to go about it and I think a lot of people realized that. Anyone can 'lose weight' if they stop eating, but losing fat while being healthy and doing it the right way is a totally different ballgame."

Aside from the obvious health-related incentives, Gabriele put up a financial incentive to those who "won" the contest. \$3,000 to the biggest body fat-losing team of three participants and \$500

to the person who lost the most body fat individually. Though by Gabriele's own admission, he threw the contest together quickly, the reaction from the participants was overwhelming. Once the contest got started, participants became friends and even a bit of playful trash-talking ensued. The common theme – to lose fat in a healthy way for the long-term – brought folks closer, not only with the staff at Gabriele Fitness and Performance, but with each other.

"I just assumed it was a weight loss contest," said John Hadad of Berkely Heights. "I didn't know that it was going to be that different, but it was much different than anybody really expected. We all just thought losing body fat would be similar to losing weight, but it was very different. I think we all look at it now as a great educational experience."

While most participants came into the contest sharing Hadad's view on what was ahead, Gabriele and his staff had something far more advanced and far-reaching in mind. Not only was the plan to educate the participants on the long-term benefits of losing weight via body fat, Gabriele, Langton and the rest of the trainers at GFP saw an opportunity to drum up interest in the group work-out philosophy, a type of training that is a key factor for adults to reach their goals, especially those who haven't worked out much in their adult life or have been working out the wrong way.

"When we're in the gym and we're lifting weights, we're stimulating muscle growth which is going to increase your metabolism, boost your metabolism and have you burn more calories, which is essentially how you burn more fat," Gabriele said.

Once the participants got into the gym and began to work, several of them saw real results for the first time in several years. One of those contestants, Lisa Andres, a mother of three from Murray Hill, was amazed at the way she literally transformed herself over the course of the 50-day program. After nearly three years at another gym, Andres came to GFP, enrolled in the contest and worked hard while following the program's instructions. The results, she said, were life-changing.

"This has definitely made me stronger, I can definitely breathe better," Andres said. "Back when I was heavier, I was losing my breath just walking up a flight of stairs. I was taking naps in the middle of the day. I didn't have a lot of endurance to do activities with my children. This has definitely given me part of my life back."

Overall, during the entire competition participants lost 436.4 pounds of fat, which is an average of 6.4 pounds of fat per contestant. However, aside from the numbers, the staff at GFP showed 70 people a better way to live, a better way to eat, a better way to exercise and a better way to approach meeting their fitness goals. For Langton, helping people lose weight came second to educating those he trained and the friendships he gained due to spending a ton of time with the people in the program over those 50 days.

"I was a high school and college coach before I started training, so working with these people was a new experience for me, but building these relationships, having people kind of lean on me was really what this was all about," Langton said.

The competition's overall winner was Dominic Callandriello and the team competition winners were Hugo Barth, Michele Castagna and Gene Castagna, but in truth, everyone won something during the nearly two-months they spent participating in GFP's first "Biggest Loser" contest. In

fact, according to Gabriele, GFP plans on holding two more "Biggest Loser" contests in the next six months, from late-September right up until Thanksgiving – at the very beginning of the holiday season, when most folks gain their biggest amount of weight for the year – and another "Biggest Loser" contest just after the New Year to help people shed those holiday pounds.

For Gabriele, Langton and the rest of the extremely dedicated and passionate staff at Gabriele Fitness and Performance, watching their trainees work hard on a daily basis to not only meet their fitness goals, but to learn how to live a better, healthier life was an amazing reward. For Andres, Hadad and the rest of the participants, the lessons learned and the body fat shed were all parts of a larger, eye-opening outlook on leading a healthy life.

"This changed everybody's idea about losing weight and about how to be in shape," Hadad said.

The other 68 past "Biggest Loser" contestants would surely agree and the new participants to come will undoubtedly concur once they've had the opportunity to experience the unique and truly life-changing programs available at Gabriele Fitness and Performance.

For more information on the Fat Blast Program, click here: <http://www.gabrielefitness.com/new-jersey-fitness-training-fat-blast.html>

**Photo above:** *From left to right: Vince Gabriele (owner and founder of Gabriele Fitness and Performance), overall winner Dominic Callandriello (holding a sign that reads '436.4 lbs' which was the amount of weight in terms of body fat lost by the entire competition), contestant John Hadad, contestant Lisa Andres and GFP head trainer Tom Langton.*



*Andres shows off her abs after participating in the 50-day "Biggest Loser" contest held by Gabriele Fitness and Performance in Berkeley Heights. Andres took part in the Fat Blast Boot Camp program, specifically designed by the staff at GFP.*



*Lisa Andres, Murray Hill resident and mother of three, in her "before and after" pictures taken at the beginning and end of her participation in Gabriele Fitness and Performance's "Biggest Loser" contest which was held at the Berkeley Heights gym between May and mid-July.*



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