

Defined by Community: Bridgit Kin-Charlton & Bdefined

How does a Milwaukee native find her way to Williamsburg? As with many good stories, it involves a boy. “I was actually dating a guy who ended up getting a scholarship to William & Mary to get his MBA,” says Bridgit Kin-Charlton, who had just graduated from University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. “I really had no ties, I’ve always been a free spirit, love travel and so on.” The relationship with the boy didn’t last, but Bridgit’s relationship with Williamsburg did.

Bridgit worked as Kingsmill Resort’s fitness director for seven years, which inspired and motivated her to open her own business. “When I worked there...there was such a high, gold-level of standard, five-star standard of our expectations,” says Bridgit. “I went through so much customer service training, management training, I feel like I was really groomed well there.” And two of her clients at the time were Mike Youngblood and Leslynn Twiddy, of Twiddy Realty—when she consulted them in 2005, they introduced her to a nascent New Town.

Bridgit’s business, Bdefined, is a boutique fitness center; it has no open gym space, and no group exercise classes. Instead, as Bridgit says, “It’s exclusively personal training—you’re coming in specifically to meet with your trainer...it’s very customized, very personalized.” And while this means Bridgit and her staff don’t need as much room as a more traditional gym, spending Bdefined’s first ten years in the SunTrust building proved challenging in other ways. “Coming from Milwaukee, it was very common to have a fitness center in a high-rise building,” says Bridgit, “but I don’t think that, at the time, it was quite common around here.” People were a little nervous to poke their head in, or thought that Bdefined was corporate wellness for SunTrust. Despite the somewhat off-putting location, Bridgit and Bdefined quickly found their niche: women’s health and Baby Boomers.

This is not to say that Bdefined only takes on female clients aged 50 to 75—Bridgit reports that their clients’ age range stretch between 8 and 97, and thirty to forty percent of her clients are male—but younger clients generally start with Bdefined because of a parent or grandparent. “When I built my business, and put together my business model, it really did center itself around who is in Williamsburg, and what does the community need,” says Bridgit. She saw a large community of retired folks who understood and valued the importance of exercise: “they love to golf, they love to play tennis, they love to walk, they love to swim, it’s always been a very active community,” she says. With her current space on Center Street, right across from Sullivan Square—gutted and redesigned to Bridgit’s specifications—Bridgit and her team continue to serve the Williamsburg community with virtual and outdoor training sessions. If you’ve ever passed by Sullivan Square and seen groups of two and three exercising, you’ve probably seen Bdefined’s mission at work.

Brought to you by New Town Williamsburg—stay home, stay safe, support local business. Kit Arbuckle reporting for the New Town Commercial Association (edition 20.8)