

Member Spotlight: ABC Kids Climbing - An Olympic Gym

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[ABC Kids Climbing](#) in Boulder, Colorado, has built something truly special. It was the first, and to date, the largest climbing gym dedicated to training youth athletes. It also trained two of the four Olympians on Team USA who competed in the Tokyo Olympic Games.

The gym started inside the Boulder Rock Club from the minds and passion of professional climbers Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou and Didier Raboutou. We interviewed Robyn to better understand how this came to fruition, and what the future holds.

Jake Byk, Marketing Coordinator, CWA:

Tell me in your own words about your amazing experience in competition climbing?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou, Owner and Head Coach, ABC Kids Climbing:

I would say that competition climbing is what has molded me into the adult/businesswoman that I am today. Competition climbing is responsible for the career that I have now, my ABC [Kids Climbing] career and the development of the ABC program, and the information that I deliver to this new generation of athletes.

Jake Byk

Jake Byk:

What made you want to make ABC happen after your experience in competition climbing?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

So basically, ABC Kids Climbing was created for my kids. I have two kids and at the time they were two and a half and five and a half years old... I saw that there was a lack of programs in our area that allowed young climbers to have practice with other young climbers. Hence, I created ABC Kids Climbing... rented a very small space at the Boulder Rock Club where we introduced our program for the first time to the community.

Jake Byk:

How was that received by the community?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

Really well. I think that it was [received really well]... my reputation as an athlete, as a competitor and as a person in the community, a parent in the community. And so from there, I was able to build a solid program based on my past knowledge of climbing, my past experience, and then collaborating with the fact that I was well integrated into the community because of my own two kids growing up in Boulder.

Jake Byk:

Were you ever worried that it wasn't going to take off?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

You know, we started slow, so that was important. [It was] very much part of the plan [that] we had a small space and the idea was to create a very personal, intimate program for young athletes, and see how it goes and build upon that. And that's exactly what we did.

I really credit our growth pattern to our success and would encourage anyone if they're ever going to start anything, you start small, make sure that you start from the ground and work up



Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou

that you start from the ground and work up.

Jake Byk:

What is the main asset that ABC Kids Climbing brings to the community that you think most attributes to its success?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

Whether you're a new climber or coming from a climbing family like my kids, I feel like there's just this mesh of parents and kids that are really there to support each other. There's just this open arms, welcoming community feeling within the building where every child matters. And that's incredibly important to us that even though we have Olympians in the building, whether you're coming in for the first time, or you're about to fly to Tokyo, our goal is to make sure that everyone that's at ABC [Kids Climbing] feels welcome.

Jake Byk:

[Are] there other aspects of your business where you try to insert community into either the business structure or how you operate?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

The families are important to us. The parents come with the kids – they're welcome in our building and we encourage them to be a part of the growth of their child.

Jake Byk



Brooke Raboutou competes in the IFSC World Cup in Salt Lake City, Utah. Raboutou took home a bronze medal.

Jake Byk:

Two of your athletes – including your daughter – competed in climbing's debut at the Olympics. How do you feel that this will affect your legacy?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

That makes me really happy just for [them] and [their] own personal achievements. [Brooke's] definitely done something that no one else in the family has done. Climbing is in the Olympics. We don't really know the impact that it's going to have on all of us, but... we're extremely excited to have contributed in probably the biggest way any one facility could have.

Jake Byk:

What value do you get out of being a member of the CWA?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

So for me being a member of the CWA is similar to ABC. **It's being part of a community, it's listening and contributing, and leaning on the CWA for their contributions.**

Together, we can build a foundation that helps everyone from those that

have the most experience to those that have the least experience.

Jake Byk:

What recommendations would you have for folks in the indoor climbing industry who want to grow a business [like yours]?

Robyn Erbesfield-Raboutou:

Just make sure that you welcome everyone into your community and hire the right people. Because the greatness that ABC [Kids Climbing] has is not because of me, but because of us, because of our team.

The CWA is here for you and your gym, whether you're training kids for the Olympics or are opening a gym for the first time. Become a member to take advantage of the vast resources and community CWA membership offers.

About the Author



Jake Byk is the marketing coordinator for the Climbing Wall Association. He's an avid hiker, mountaineer, lover of hard-to-reach places and long drives. He's spent four years as a journalist, then a public lands advocate, documenting the Great Plains and Mountain West before joining the CWA.

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September 20, 2021

CWA TEAM ADDS MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR ☐

September 8, 2021