

BACKGROUND & CHALLENGES

The Crossroads YMCA has long prioritized engaging youth through innovative programming to increase family memberships and retention. While the YMCA traditionally offers gymnastics, dance, swimming, and other mainstream activities, it faced the challenge of differentiating itself from competing organizations that provided similar offerings. The leadership team sought a unique program that could attract new families, provide an exciting experience for children, and fit seamlessly within their existing spaces. Additionally, they needed a program that could contribute positively to membership revenue rather than just break even.



SOLUTIONS

» WHY NINJAZONE?

Unique Differentiation: Unlike other local programs, NinjaZone offered a distinct branding with uniforms, headbands, and structured curriculum.

Scalability & Flexibility: The program could be implemented in various-sized spaces, from 700-square-foot classrooms to larger group exercise studios.

Engagement & Retention: The program immediately attracted high participation rates, supporting the YMCA's goal of increasing family engagement.

Consistent Experience: With structured resources, training, and onboarding provided by NinjaZone, all YMCA branches could maintain a uniform and high-quality experience.

» IMPLEMENTATION

The Crossroads YMCA launched NinjaZone in September 2019 as part of the Southlake expansion.

The implementation process included:

High Enrollment Success: Initial enrollment exceeded expectations, making NinjaZone the second-largest recreational program at the YMCA, surpassed only by swim lessons.

Engagement Initiatives: The YMCA introduced NinjaZone-themed Parent Nights Out and birthday parties, significantly boosting participation.

Increased Attendance: Previous parent night events struggled to attract more than five attendees per session, but the NinjaZone branding led to full-capacity events.

Program Oversight: A dedicated Ninja Coordinator was appointed to oversee the program and maintain coaching consistency across locations.

RESULTS & IMPACT

The impact of NinjaZone has been substantial:

- **Increased Enrollment:** As of February 2025, the program has 803 active participants, up from 700 in mid-2024.
- **Higher Membership Retention:** The family membership retention rate at Crossroads YMCA stands at an impressive 77%.
- **Financial Success:** Unlike many YMCA programs designed to break even, NinjaZone consistently generates positive net revenue, indicating high demand and effective cost management.



- **Stronger Brand Identity:** NinjaZone has become a recognizable and well-loved component of the YMCA's offerings, helping to attract new families.



UNEXPECTED BENEFITS & EXPANSION

In addition to the planned benefits, several unexpected positive outcomes emerged:

Increased Attendance at Special Events: NinjaZone-themed events saw overwhelming participation, demonstrating the program's appeal beyond regular classes.

Enhanced Community Engagement: Parents and children alike have expressed strong enthusiasm for the program, leading to word-of-mouth promotion.

Staff Development: The program provided an opportunity for young leaders, such as 19-year-old Zach, to take on significant roles in coaching and program management.

Looking ahead, the Crossroads YMCA is exploring expansion opportunities, with 11 capital projects in progress.



BOTTOM LINE

NinjaZone has proven to be a game-changer for the Crossroads YMCA, not only in boosting participation and revenue but also in aligning with the organization's mission and values. Its structured yet adaptable format has allowed the YMCA to maximize its facilities while providing an engaging and educational experience for children.