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# THE CrossFit LIFE

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## More Than the Street: A Steve's Club Story

Through Steve's Club and CrossFit, a high-schooler found discipline, community and hope for the future.

By Liz Wolfe with Lee Knight and Steve Liberati

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All images: Rosemary Mackintosh

Kevin accomplished two major goals in one week: he graduated from high school and got a muscle-up. Both accomplishments were the result of perseverance, hard work and some help from Steve's Club National Program.

Steve's Club is a national network of programs that makes it possible for underserved youth of any socioeconomic background to join in the CrossFit community at reduced, low or no cost. Teens from tough neighborhoods and difficult family lives have the opportunity to be involved in fitness and other positive outlets instead of drugs, gangs and violence. After school, they go to their local CrossFit affiliate, where they sweat alongside other members of their local community: firefighters, lawyers, doctors, businessmen and soccer moms.

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1 of 2

Kevin moved to the United States in 2005 from Puerto Rico and has been working out with Steve's Club Camden since 2011. His neighborhood reflects some of the challenges we see many Steve's Club athletes facing.

"My neighborhood is kinda violent," Kevin said. "Every now and then, there is a robbery and drug-related problem. Steve's Club has been a positive thing in my life by keeping me off the streets."

Steve's Club National Program director Lee Knight sees the mission of Steve's Club in Kevin.

"Kevin is a good example of why Steve's Club and CrossFit is important. He was getting into trouble at school, got into a few fights, and it seemed possible that he'd let the attitude of his neighborhood prevail," Knight said. "Now he comes to Steve's Club and is excited to share things that happen in school, as well as new PRs in the gym. His successes in CrossFit carry over to a feeling of pride in himself and his accomplishments."

CrossFit isn't just the sport of fitness; it's about bringing the values of hard work, dedication and perseverance to everyday life. What we see in the gym is often a reflection of what happens in the outside world.

Kevin is no exception.

Steve Liberati, who started the first Steve's Club in Camden, N.J., believes Kevin has achieved so much in the gym based on dedication, follow-through and one of the Steve's Club values: discipline.

"On most days, Kevin walks to Steve's Club from his house, which takes about 45 minutes," Liberati said. "This really says a lot about the person Kevin is and shows his commitment, drive and dedication to CrossFit."

"As a result of his hard work and determination, he can now do advanced exercises such as rope climbs, handstand push-ups, ring dips, pull-ups and muscle-ups. I have seen Kevin make a major transformation both physically and interpersonally."

Kevin's accomplishments didn't come easily. According to Knight, he came to Steve's Club early, stayed late and did the work necessary to reach his goal. In the span of one month, Kevin went from being unable to do a single pull-up to doing 30 chest-to-bar pull-ups during the 2012 CrossFit Games Open.

Other Steve's Club kids look to Kevin as a role model. His great attitude can turn negatives into positives. He inspires others to work hard in school, at work and in life.



**Kevin's new goals are getting a degree in computer engineering and figuring out butterfly pull-ups.**

One of Kevin's mentors, John Costa, is a member of CrossFit Tribe, which shares space with Steve's Club. Costa sees Kevin as "the hope other at-risk teens need. Other teens need to see kids like Kevin and understand there is more than just the street. He has shown many athletes who are now part of Steve's Club a different way of life, one full of determination—which is followed by success. Kevin's progress spans past a set of rings and a barbell."

### Steve's Club Athlete Profile

Name: Kevin

Local Steve's Club: Steve's Club Camden/CrossFit Tribe

CrossFitting Since: May 2011

Favorite WOD or Exercise: Muscle-up, deadlift, clean and jerk

Grace: 4:48 (RX)

Proudest CrossFit Moment: "The proudest CrossFit moments I've had so far are my first muscle-up, getting a PR on my deadlift (365 lb.) and doing Grace in 4:48."

Most Important Steve's Club Value: "Teamwork is the most important Steve's Club value to me."

School and CrossFit Goals: "My goal was to graduate high school, and my CrossFit goal was a muscle-up. I'm proud to say I achieved both in the same week."

New Goals: "My personal goal is to go to college and get a major in computer engineering. My new goal in CrossFit is to get butterfly pull-ups."

