Aiko (Grace) Gallagher
SweatNET, Owner and Founder

Age: 29

WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

Chicago IL

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN CHARLOTTE AREA?

Since 2015

TELL US A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT YOU?

I was a D1 college swimmer and passed on my opportunity for Olympic trials to prioritize my education. I never wanted to be defined for my athleticism, but rather I wanted to use my athleticism to help other people. I did not quite know how to do that until I moved to Charlotte.

DURING YOUR TIME VOLUNTEERING FOR A COMMUNITY ACTIVITY OR PROJECT, WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT?

We commit to a charity event at least once per month. Selecting just one memorable moment is a Challenge, so I will choose the LAST one. The week prior to the COVID shutdown we celebrated International Women's Day with SweatNET. We brought over 300 women together in the same space and had a few hours to feel electrified by everyone's energy. Not a dry eye in the room. https://www.facebook.com/sweatnetclt/videos/international-womens-day/2499653650247154/

IN YOUR OPINION, HOW DO YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE COMMUNITY? PLEASE BE AS DETAILED AS YOU CAN.

I do not deserve this award without my co-founder Erin Garber. Everything we do is centered around community and bringing people together. This past year over 44,000 people came together at different events of SweatNET engaging in healthy activities. Instead of competing with local fitness studios we feature them. Instead of being exclusive and selling "sexy bodies" we focus on connection and making everyone in our community feel welcomed and accepted. When I moved to Charlotte, I did not have friends. I found them in fitness. I wanted an organization that could do the same for others and that is what we built. Here is just one of our events: https://vimeo.com/362677556

PLEASE LET US KNOW ANY AWARDS OR RECOGNITIONS YOU'VE RECEIVED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER:

I have built a business that has expanded to 15 cities in 2 years. I'm not sure I get a badge or a sticker for that, but I will wear that with pride.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES OR INTEREST?
I have been completely consumed by love for my first baby August Gallagher. He is everything to me right now and it is hard to even imagine a hobby (not related to SweatNET) that does not involve him. SweatNET has side projects that I am leading such as DropSound Schools, Childrens Yoga, and Senior Yoga that I am really excited about, however if I have spare time, it's being around my baby.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE QUOTE THAT YOU STAND BY? Be Kind. Do good. Live well.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN 5 YEARS? 10 YEARS? Right here. I love where I am with my career and the trajectory of SweatNET and my personal life. I want more kids. I want SweatNET to grow and have a base in 100 cities by the end of 5 years. I don't want to stop what I am doing - I don't want to sell my company - I get joy each and every day doing what I do. I'm not here chasing money or trying to get a following. I am here because it feels right.

CAN YOUR SHARE ONE THING THAT IS ON YOUR BUCKET LIST?

I do not have a bucket list. I live each day in the moment. If I died tomorrow, I would die without feeling I missed out on anything.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU USED YOUR PASSPORT?

Jamaica in 2019. It was almost expired - thankfully Jamaica doesn't have the 6-month rule.

WHAT IS A FUN FACT ABOUT YOURSELF THAT NO ONE KNOWS?

I am an introvert.

WHO IS YOUR HERO?

My husband. I've never met anyone else who can put everyone in the world before themselves and all for absolutely no accolades.

WHAT WAS THE LAST BOOK YOU READ?

Out Of The Crisis by W. Edwards Deming

WHAT WAS THE LAST MOVIE YOU SAW?

Mulan (The live action one) - not as funny as the cartoon but pretty well done for a Disney movie.

WHAT WAS THE LAST CONCERT YOU SAW?

I took my husband to Ray LaMontagne -- we love his music and had great seats. After sitting through one song, we looked at each other, left and went to Cook-Out, got milkshakes and sat in our car listening to his music for 2 hours while looking at the city. 10/10 would highly recommend it.