Stony Brook’s Campus Recreation Center held their annual ladies’ night on Monday, as a platform to educate women on weight lifting and breaking the stereotypes of women and physical activities. One floor up they held a session of Pink Gloves Boxing, a fitness program aimed to accomplish the same goal.

Since introduced in Spring of 2014, Stony Brook University offered Pink Gloves Boxing to over 150 students and faculty.

“Fitness is a feeling, it’s not all about an image and Pink Gloves Boxing will provide that feeling,” Dean Bowen, Assistant Director of Fitness and Health at Stony Brook’s Campus Recreation Center, said.

Bowen first learned about the program at a fitness convention in 2013. That summer, him and former manager of fitness and wellness at the campus REC, Amanda Turnbull, got Pink Gloves Certified.
“Based on the three pillars: fun, community and achievement, they will be able to participate in an environment that’s only competitive with themselves – it really will truly bring out something different than they have experienced in any other fitness class.” said Bowen, who worked at Stony Brook since 2009.

The boxing class, exclusively offered to women, is the brainchild of founder Garret Garrels. Garrels founded Pink Gloves Boxing in 2006 and since then the program has over 30 clubs and studios from Stony Brook University to Karlstad, Sweden.

“We had our first Pink Gloves boxing class [at Stony Brook] in the spring of 2014 and had one class,” Bowen said. “We limited it to twenty people and we had only 14 people sign up.” Within these two years, the classes expanded.

“Right now we are offering six classes of Pink Gloves Boxing with over 140 participants and over 50 people on the waitlist,” he added. Bowen says it might even be possible to add two more classes with the waitlisted participants.

Pink Gloves Boxing is more than just a fitness program– it’s a safe haven for women who don’t find their place in the conventional weight room.

“Women need that empowerment, that self-esteem, that self-efficacy. They just need the right environment to do it,” Bowen, who started working at Stony Brook in 2009, said.

“Pink Gloves boxing has helped me both physically and mentally, it’s a great coming together, it’s a motivational class where we all come together and lift each other up,” Kristi Ladowski, injury prevention & outreach coordinator at Stony Brook Medicine, said.
There’s no competition,” she said.

According to “Women’s Lives: A Psychological Exploration,” published by Psychology Press, gender stereotypes on activities, occupations and behaviors develop as young as six years old. By the time a girl enters her teenage years, gender identity and conformity has been increased.

Because of the stereotypes and gender conformity being instilled at a young age, women grow up believing they may not do certain things as well as men.

“The stigma behind the saying [you hit like a girl] we break that week 2,” said Dean Bowen.

Pink Gloves Boxing instructor Estelle Gyimah enforces that lesson in her sessions, “For Pink Gloves, it’s more: you hit like you,” Gyimah said. “Everything in this class is you are battling your inner self.”

“I think they[participants] are 100 percent empowered… Nothing is going to stop them, if they want they can put their mind to whatever they want to do and be successful with it. They’ve proven that with pink gloves boxing because that’s a challenge in itself,” Bowen said.