

Tae kwon do instructor brings art into focus for adults and kids

By Yaron Deskalo

Recreation Department class held December belt promotion and exhibition

Tae kwon do, translated as “the way of the foot and hand,” has been Pete Sorce’s passion for more than 17 years.

“The reason why foot comes before hand is because tae kwon do is known for its kicking, but traditional tae kwon do has more of a balance,” Sorce said. Recently at South Milwaukee High School, Sorce’s students, as well as himself, participated in belt testing while putting on a public demonstration of tae kwon do skills.



Shayne Meyer, 9, leaps over two classmates with a flying side kick to break his board during a December belt testing and exhibition for the Recreation Department’s tae kwon do program.

“That is where you go in front of judges and show your skills, and they determine if you can advance to the next rank,” Sorce said.

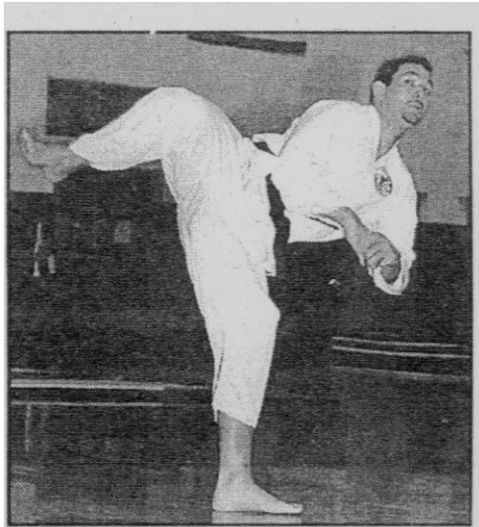
There are many different skills both children and adults need to complete in order to advance to the next level.

One type of exercise is called a form. It is a basic pattern of movements. There also are basic self-defense skills, board-breaking and sparring.

However, besides the physical techniques, there is also an interesting part of the belt-testing.

“(The judges) also ask mental questions, like for kids who have home rules they have to follow, like you must keep your room neat and clean,” Sorce said.

Just because adults don’t have parents nagging them to clean their rooms, it does not exclude them from the mental category of the belt-testing.



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Instructor Pete Sorce demonstrates a form while testing for his fourth-degree black belt at the high school.

Adults need to know the meaning of taekwon do, among other things.

Sorce, who has been a judge before, did not decide whether his students should advance to the next belt.

“Usually, I am one of the judges, and I get a couple of my colleagues,” Sorce said.

On Saturday, however, Sorce tested for his fourth-degree black belt, five away from the most coveted rank.

In the competition, Sorce had to do a lot of forms, self-defending against a punch and different grabs, knife defense, board-breaking and a combination break.

A combination break is when many techniques are performed back-to-back so they flow. Finally, Sorce performed two power breaks of boards and bricks.

In belt testing, unlike a competition, students and adults are not contesting each other. Rather, they are competing against themselves to reach a personal goal of self-improvement.

Taekwon do not only enhances one’s confidence, but can be beneficial to one’s health, Sorce said.

“There is physical conditioning involved and cardiovascular, but mostly it is mental and learning how to concentrate and developing discipline,” Sorce said.

Sorce teaches his classes twice a week to both adults and children, but he takes much caution before advancing children to the next belt.

“I have a minimum of five years of experience before anybody can pass into the first-degree black belt,” Sorce said.

Sorce teaches two taekwon do classes, one for children and one for adults. The children’s class, ages 6 to 12, runs from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The adult’s class is from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. on the same days. Both are held at the middle school, 1225 Memorial Drive.

The class, started three years ago, costs \$62 for about 20 classes.

The students also attend about four taekwon do tournaments per session.

For more information about taekwon do, visit Sorce’s Web site at www.execpc.com/~sorcetkd/.