

Kickin' it with the family

All ages compete at Milwaukee Invitational taekwondo tourney

By Candy Czernicki
Staff Writer

You've probably seen the anti-smoking commercial with the teenage kid and a voiceover telling him: "Clean your room. Eat your vegetables. Feed the dog."

Pete Sorce has similar requirements of his martial arts students.

Sorce, owner of Sorce Martial Arts, on Sept. 24 held the first ever and first annual Milwaukee Invitational taekwondo tournament at the South Milwaukee High School fieldhouse.

More than 70 of his students, 4-year-olds through adults, competed at all levels against more than 100 competitors from martial arts schools from Oconomowoc, Ripon and Oneida, among others.

Presumably the adults know how to conduct themselves. Kids tend to need a little guidance.

According to parent volunteer Rachel Pribyl, Sorce's "children's home rules" must be memorized prior to each advancement in belt color and rank. They involve such things as "I will keep my room clean" and "I will greet my parents when I enter and leave a room."

"The parents really like that,

AT A GLANCE

WHAT: Sorce Martial Arts

WHY: Taekwondo lessons for all ages are available. Martial arts classes are available for \$29 for a two-week trial which includes a free uniform. The yoga trial program is \$19 for three classes.

WHERE: 926 Milwaukee Ave.

CONTACT: (414) 759-9531 or www.sorcema.com

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and the kids like it too," Pribyl said.

Sorce checks in with teachers, too, before advancing a child to the next level, to make sure he or she is behaving at school, too.

"He just really wants to be part of the community," Pribyl said. "This is something he's done since he was 6 years old, and it's had a huge impact on his life."

Home rules key

Sorce said the home rules make his program unique.

"The most important thing with martial arts training does is with character development and life skills," Sorce said.

He tells parents to put a copy of the home rules on the refrigerator, and if children are acting out, often they straighten up when a parent says "I'm going to tell Mr. Sorce." Sorce said when he hears of a violation, he has a talk with the children, and sometimes will have a conference with the children and parents.

AND THE WINNERS ARE

The following awards were handed out at the Milwaukee Invitational taekwondo tournament:

MEN'S OVERALL GRAND CHAMPION: Paul Bitzan, Sorce Martial Arts, South Milwaukee

WOMEN'S OVERALL GRAND CHAMPION: Nicole Cogswell, Lakeshore Tae-Kwon Do, Manitowoc

GIRLS' OVERALL GRAND CHAMPION: Taylor Eckstein, American Black Belt Academy, Oshkosh

BOYS' OVERALL GRAND CHAMPION: Fernando Santella Adam, Hartland Recreation Department, Hartland

SCHOOL SPIRIT AWARD: American Black Belt Academy, Oshkosh

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Sorce said he takes pride in his work when parents tell him about their children's increased confidence. He gets involved with teachers and parents when children are misbehaving at school, and attitudes must change before children are allowed to advance to the next belt rank.

Integrating it with family

The home rules are doubly enforced in the Foerman family, where 10-year-old Brittany, 17-year-old Zach, and father Bill, a mortgage broker at Aadus Bank, enjoy the sport together.

The Sept. 24 tournament was Brittany's third competition and Zach's second. Both children placed in the top three in most of their events. Bill did not compete.

Sorce did a demonstration at

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South Milwaukee Voice Graphic

LOCAL NEWS



COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS PHOTO BY CHARLES AJER

Brittany Foerman, 10, kicks during a sparring match at the Milwaukee Invitational taekwondo tournament at the South Milwaukee High School fieldhouse Sept. 24. Brittany placed in the top three of most events she competed in at the tournament.

Kickin'

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Rawson Elementary School, where Brittany is a fifth-grader, and "he taught us some stuff," she said. After seeing the way that Sorce interacted with even the youngest students, Bill was hooked, and the two signed up for lessons. Soon Zach was in on it too.

Sport instills respect

Bill said he has noticed a difference in his children since they took up the sport.

"A lot of it has to do with their interaction with each other," he said. "It's 'yes' or 'no,' not 'yeah.' They have better attention spans in other things."

For his part, Zach, a white belt,

said he has gotten "respect and discipline" out of what he has learned so far. Brittany, a gold belt, said the discipline she has learned has helped her get her messy room in better shape.

Bill is a fan of the home rules.

"(Sorcer) sends a letter home when it's time for belt testing," Bill said. "Parents and teachers both have to sign off, to make sure they're doing their work at home and school. He wants to make sure that they're not only being good for him, but for the other people they should be good for, too."

The three take taekwondo lessons together on Wednesday nights. Brittany and Zach do their own thing on Mondays, and Friday night is family night.

"It's neat to be in there with the entire family," Bill said.