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FEATURED

Taekwondo studio gets new start in old location

By Ryan Marshall rmarshall@newspost.com 14 hrs ago



Michelle White, owner of Tucker's Tae Kwon Do in Frederick, demonstrates a front kick in her Hughes Ford Road studio.

Staff photo by Bill Green

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The Frederick News-Post *invites new business owners in Frederick County to share some details about their venture. Open for Business is a chance to find out more about what's new in your neighborhood.*

Michelle White, owner of Tucker's Tae Kwon Do in Frederick, recently talked with us about re-opening her studio at 1341 Hughes Ford Road, and the challenges and benefits of mastering the martial arts.

So the business is re-opened, right? Were you involved in it the first time?

Yeah, it was my business always. I had it from 2012 through 2015. I actually built out and opened up that space at the center where I'm at. But then I closed it. I had a little bit of health problems that have subsided, and they're all good now. So I had left the area — actually, for like a year, I was not living in Maryland. And I just came back last summer, reached out to my landlord, and by a miracle was able to get my actual space back that I built.

Why were you interested in having a studio in Frederick?

I wanted to work and live in the same county, and after graduating from Mount St. Mary's in 2002 and Leadership Frederick County in 2004, I learned a great deal about this lovely town. Owning and running my own Martial Art's/Fitness studio is a true passion of mine. I originally was teaching taekwondo back in 2007 for the Frederick City Police Departments PAL program, working with underprivileged youth, as well as teaching after school programs at a variety of public schools in Frederick where I was able to promote fitness, self defense and respect for others to many kids. Once I opened my own space, I am able to reach a wider population and each person is able to learn and grow in a non-threatening environment.

What got you into taekwondo?

Oh, boy. Way back when, when I was 19 — I always was athletic, I did soccer when I was a child. I was 19 years old when I first started it, and just loved it, never got out of it, got into competitions right away as a white belt and competed all the way. I competed in Maryland, obviously, in their state championships back in '92, '93, '94, '95, and I was Maryland state champion. Then I won and went to nationals in '93, and I won nationals in *poomsae*, which is forms. I got the gold medal in that.

What do you like about taekwondo?

It's something that you can actually keep with you your whole life. A lot of my friends that I've had from taekwondo are like 28-, 30-year-old friendships. So you stick with it. It's got a lot to do with discipline and focus and perseverance and making sure that if you can't do something today, you might have to keep working on it and practicing it, and it comes eventually to you. So it's something like levels that you keep trying to climb up a ladder to get somewhere. So to me, it was something very challenging and rewarding at the same time.

Is it more of a physical thing or a mental thing?

I would say both. Definitely has to be a physical element to it. And I have some students who have some physical limitations to doing fully taekwondo practitioners. So you have to kind of teach in a way to allow some people to do things that they can do and some folks can't. But it is definitely mental. I just ran the [Frederick Running Festival] back in May, whenever that was. And I decided to do it nine days before the race and was not trained for it. But I think my mental martial arts, the way I am from my martial arts, allowed me to get through that race. And I did it. I did it in like 2 hours and 50 minutes, first time out.

What are the mental aspects or elements that it teaches you?

Never give up. You're going to keep trying as hard as you can to get somewhere. Practice, continuous, something that you don't do for a short time. It's a long haul. It's like doing a marathon, something like that. So you're not training to run down the street and run back; you've got to do this for a long time. And there are a lot of different components to martial arts — some you may be good at, and some you may not be. So kind of an all-around, you've got to make sure you can do it all.

What's one of the most challenging things about teaching?

Working with a cranky 5-year-old in a group setting when they have a melt down. One of my strong suites, is working with children and getting them to cooperate and work hard to get drills done quickly and efficiently. Teaching of any kind is challenging but seeing their eyes light up when they actually accomplish something challenging, then it is rewarding and worthwhile.

Where is your studio?

We're on Hughes Ford Road. I actually face the airport. When I look out the windows, I can see the airplanes. We're open Monday through Friday, from 5 to 8:30 p.m. And Saturday it's 9 a.m. to noon.

How many levels or classes do you teach?

In taekwondo it's by level, which is beginner, intermediate and advanced. We teach students from five years old and up. And that's split up by belts, so beginner belts are no belt, white, yellow and orange. Intermediate is green, blue and purple. And then advanced is red, brown and black. The taekwondo classes are mixed ages. My kickboxing class is mostly adults, like teenagers and adults. And then I also do women's self-defense. And we've most recently added Brazilian jujitsu. But somebody else is teaching that, not myself.

This interview was edited for clarity and space.

New business owners interested in being featured in Open for Business should contact Ryan Marshall at rmarshall@newspost.com.

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