

## The Arizona Republic: Southwest Valley

### Buckeye to offer a course in Korean Sword

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Special for The Republic

Jun. 6, 2007 08:54 AM

More than 2,000 years ago, the martial art Haidong Gumdo, or Korean Sword, was developed as a way for people to fight multiple opponents.

Now Buckeye will offer a course in this ancient and powerful technique.

Glendale resident Chris Guffey will teach the classes, which will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning next week, at the Dr. Saide Recreation Center in Buckeye.

Guffey, 21, holds a black belt in four martial arts and was recently certified to teach Korean Sword by his master instructor in Korea. He also will teach a variety of karate classes at the center for all ages and abilities.

Guffey described how Korean Sword was originally designed for both large-scale battles and one-on-one combat:

"It uses various cuts, thrusts and blocks to form one of the most well-rounded sword arts ever. It has a very simple, effective and fun-to-learn curriculum," he said, noting the martial art was established in the United States in 1996 and has rapidly grown in popularity.

"Growing up, I always studied arts that were based on utilizing your body and then at a certain level you get a minor education in weapons," he said.

"Well, my favorite part has always been the weapons, so I was ecstatic when I was able to study a weapon-based art," Guffey added. "The art is so fluid and increases your physical and mental strength immensely."

Guffey, who began teaching martial arts at 15 in Misawa, Japan, plans on spending the first month of the classes focusing on the basics of the martial arts,

before moving on to more intermediate and advanced techniques.

"Haidong Gumdo is a martial art that three generations can practice together - it is a class that all ages and abilities can enjoy," he said. "As long as you can stand and have one good arm to wield the sword, you can participate in class."

Guffey's fiancée, Maricela Madrigal, took her first Korean Sword class in March. Not your usual pastime for the 23-year-old Glendale resident, who teaches Spanish at Tolleson Union High School.

"It is very enjoyable because it teaches a lot of discipline and it's an extremely good workout," she said. "It pushes you to your mental and physical limits."



Glendale resident Chris Guffey will teach Korean Sword classes, which will meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning June 5 at the Dr. Saide Recreation Center in Buckeye.

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##### **Karate and Korean Sword classes**

**When:** Class sessions will be held every Tuesday and Thursday Tuesday through June 28, July 3-31 and Aug. 2-30.

**Schedule:** 4-4:45 p.m., beginning youth karate; 4:45-5:45 p.m., intermediate youth karate; 5:45-6:45 p.m., advanced karate; 6:45-7:45 p.m., adult (13 and older) karate class; 7:45-8:45 p.m., Korean Sword (13 and older).

**Where:** Dr. Saide Recreation Center, 1003 E Eason Ave., Buckeye.

**Cost:** \$45 for Buckeye residents, \$55 for non-residents.

**Information:** (623) 349-6350.