

ew Tai Chi class in Sun City offers health, relaxation benefits

By Denelle Dunn, DAILY NEWS-SUN | Posted: Saturday, October 25, 2014 4:00 pm



Tai Chi

Sun City residents learn Tai Chi from Tao Sifu Franklin Wood Thursday afternoon at Bell Recreation Center. Thursday, October 23, 2014 (Jarod Opperman/Daily News-Sun)

The Tai Chi Club in Sun City celebrated this week after welcoming its 99th member.

The new charter club offers Tai Chi classes and meditation throughout the week to Recreation Centers of Sun City cardholders. Some members of the club say that the benefits of the class go beyond health — it relaxes them.

Jinny Watson of Sun City said she saw the effects of relaxation after being a little wound up after the recent controversial Duffeeland Dog Park meeting.

“After this class, the rest of the day I’m relaxed. It’s a new way to relax,” she said.

Tai Chi uses slow movements along with breathing techniques.

Harvard University is doing a study of the effects of Tai Chi and the health benefits it offers. In 2006, Harvard found that women had significantly boosted their upper and lower body flexibility as well as strength. In a 40-person study at Tufts University in 2008, it was found that arthritis pain could be reduced through Tai Chi.

Instructor Franklin Wood said he's been practicing Tai Chi for more than 52 years and has been teaching for 45.

"This is a young system of Tai Chi that I teach. It helps with balance and with Parkinson's disease. It also helps with anyone who is recovering from any surgery. It's a combination of Tai Chi and Qigong. It opens up the lungs and helps with high blood pressure," Wood said.

Qigong is a practice of breathing and meditation that enhances Tai Chi practice.

The RCSC facility used for the class is "a huge benefit to us to not have to pay any rent," said Carolyn Filer, president of the club.

"We're able to give Tai Chi classes at a very reasonable price. A year ago I had lung surgery, and this class teaches you breath and balance. I can tell my breathing is better, and my back is better," Filer said.

Other members of the class said they have also seen improvements in pain.

"This class really helped me with my joint pain and with my balance. It's very gentle," said Vangie Munoz.

The club reaches beyond the instruction room through its sunshine committee.

Mary Bentley, who is on the committee, said members of the committee help those who fall ill by mailing them greeting cards.

"It's always nice to get a card in the mail," Bentley said.

Those interested in joining the Sun City Tai Chi Club can go online at www.sctaichi.wix.com, or email the club at sctaichi@yahoo.com.

To join the club, it costs \$5 annually and \$3 per class. For non-members to attend as guests of club members, it's \$5 per class.

The one-hour class meets every Monday, Thursday and Friday.

Here is the complete schedule:

- Tai Chi Classes

Monday, Fairway Recreation Center Arizona Room No. 3, 9:15 a.m.

Thursday, Bell Recreation Center Social Hall No. 2, 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Friday, Bell Recreation Center Social Hall No. 2, 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m.

- Meditation Class

Monday, Fairway Recreation Center Arizona Room No. 3, 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.