

Karate is the new sport in town

Karate is becoming increasingly popular among young people in South Africa.

This phenomenon has led to the opening of new dojos in areas such as Fourways and Cosmo City. According to Leon Greyling of the International Japan Karate-do Association South Africa (IJKA SA), schools in the region are showing a particular interest in the sport.

Sensei Christelle Fourie, a 5th dan black belt and chief referee for IJKA SA, recommends karate to every girl child and woman in Fourways.

“Everyone should try karate in our current day and age. It not only teaches you how to react and protect yourself in dangerous situations, but can also give you tools to calm your mind when you experience difficulties in life. Karate has so many benefits,” she said.

Ian Zimba, who is also from IJKA SA and recently opened a dojo at Orion Pre-School in Cosmo City, echoed sensei Fourie’s sentiments, adding that living in a community where gender-based violence, bullying in schools and crime was generally rife, teaching karate to the youth and schoolchildren will help combat these challenges.

“Apart from the self-defence aspect where I teach them how to stand up to a threat, the training goes beyond physical techniques; it instils a sense of awareness, confidence, and the ability to respond efficiently in various situations, teaching them how to first respect themselves so that others will respect them,” said Zimba.

“Not only do I focus on the victims but also on the bullies too, by addressing the behaviours of bullies – character development through teaching good values and qualities that help them become



Karate enthusiasts train at a dojo.

model citizens.

“They learn to respect others, manage and channel their emotions and self-control. This curbs bullying behaviour. They learn leadership skills – bullies learn that they can act as leaders and can uplift other people rather than hurting them and pushing

them down. It’s all about building men and women of character through karate.”

Dojo student Tshepo Mophuting said he was 15 years old when he started karate and was now 40. He added he still knows how to ‘fly those kicks like no other’.

“I didn’t fully understand

what it was really about at first. I thought it was all about learning how to fight and I thought I was going to get beaten a lot in the dojo but to my surprise, all the senior students were concerned about my improvement, everyone wanted me to do better, and I gained a second family with

my fellow students. I learned to accept criticism as a form of self-improvement and not to take negative feedback personally. I learned to accept failure as a learning curve.”

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