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Community for Los Altos and Los Altos Hills

### [Hiruko brings holistic healing and martial arts to children](#)

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joe hu/town crier

Cameron Cronwall delivers a whopping Tae Kwon Do kick for Hiruko martial arts instructor Jorge Tejada. Hiruko is a holistic wellness center that blends healing and martial arts. The business is located at Loyola Corners.

If you're feeling stressed and in need of meditation, chances are your children are, too. Throw a noncombative emphasis on martial arts into the mix, and you're likely to celebrate what Hiruko, a Los Altos holistic wellness center, has to offer.

The center, located at Loyola Corners, integrates expressive arts like meditation with healing arts such as Tai Chi and Qigong and offers classes for all ages. Fewer than one-third of their clients so far, however, are older than 13, said teacher and executive director Natalia Gabrea Tejada.

Pass the birch-floor studio with its vibrant orange walls most afternoons and you're likely to catch a healing and martial arts class in action.

Hiruko is the Japanese god of the morning sun who, according to lore, guards the health of children, explained Tejada.

Although the children dress in the customary Tae Kwon Do uniforms, their eclectic class routine is noticeably different from that at other traditional martial arts studios. Some elements of a martial arts studio remain intact, though. Teachers Natalia and her husband, Jorge, command respect. They require each child to bow before walking barefoot onto the mat and to address their teachers formally.

The students recite a student commitment - approximately 10 lines - avowing that they are responsible for their actions and will strive to become a positive, changing force in the world.

With a playful tone, the teachers lead the children in relaxation exercises, evoking colorful images with commands like “breathe like a dragon” or “be still like the mountains.” After a brief tae kwon do kicking session, Jorge asks his disciples to recall their acupuncture lessons from past classes.

“Where do you press if you have a headache?” he asked as the students quickly placed pressure to their thumbs.

Hiruko’s brand of martial arts, said Jorge, a Tae Kwon Do and Jujitsu master, is not combative but contemplative, as it draws from its chinese origins. Introducing children to the basics of Tai Chi is beneficial to their health and mental well-being, added Natalia.

Another popular class designed specifically for 4- to 7-year-olds is “Playday.” The children are allowed to define the constraints of their games and the rules. The emphasis is on cooperation not competition, said connection and integration specialist Angela Booker.

“It’s a combination of a wellness center and martial arts. Hiruko focuses on the whole person, not just a sport. They’ve done it very well,” said Shelli Herbert, a Los Altos business owner whose son and daughter are enrolled in the Healing and Martial Arts program.

After a year in the program, Herbert said her son Joshua has made noticeable improvements.

“His focus is much better in school, and his sense of respect for adults has improved,” Herbert said.

Adult classes include cardio kickboxing, Qigong and Tai Chi, and a strength and stretching class. Wellness seminars and special events, including women’s self-defense and nutrition consulting, are available to adults as well.

Class prices range from \$135-\$165 per month, depending on duration of commitment and age. Scholarships for children are available.

For more information, call 949-1233 or visit [www.hirukocenter.com](http://www.hirukocenter.com).

Written by admin

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