

# G.R.E.A.T doing GREAT things in our community

By Carla Verbsky, Resident Contributor

“G.R.E.A.T. Self-Defense, Inc.” is a non-profit organization and its mission is to help inspire and empower others to live a safer life, especially children, teenagers and women. Instead of emphasizing only the physical aspects that are inherent in the idea of protecting oneself, G.R.E.A.T.’s main goal is to convey a “message”, in a very powerful, inspiring and unique way. It is a plea for personal change because in G.R.E.A.T. we believe that “self-defense” starts from within.

G.R.E.A.T., which stands for Girls, Ready, Empowered, And Trained, was created by Carla Verbsky, martial arts instructor and black belt in Tae Kwon Do, and a resident at Ironwood Subdivision. In her presentations, Carla shares her life and training experiences and teaches how it all relates to personal choices, one way or another, both physically and mentally. Moreover, Carla uses G.R.E.A.T. as an opportunity to talk about bullying, teen suicide, violence, and so many other horrible things that have happened and continue to happen in our community. Like any of us concerned about safety, Carla believes that those horrible things can and *must* be prevented if we all make right choices every moment of our day, every day of our lives. Therefore, instead of focusing on the end result only, or teaching others how to get out of trouble by “kicking and punching”, Carla focuses mainly on teaching them how NOT to get in trouble in the first place. And, the greatest



thing about G.R.E.A.T. is that Carla presents it in a way that is so powerful, so passionate and so inspiring that anyone who listens to her speech can’t help it but be convinced that they must make a personal change, the kind that can do considerably good to oneself and to others.

During G.R.E.A.T. presentations, Carla usually says: “My black belt has no super powers so I will never rely on my physical skills to protect myself.” In other words, physical skills do not guarantee anyone’s safety, even for a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. The truth is: we can’t mimic real life scenarios so it is almost impossible to predict how we would feel, react, and respond to a life threatening situation. Therefore, in G.R.E.A.T, Carla explains that the best way to stay safe is by learning to change the way we think and act. Distraction, lack of confidence, body language, what we wear, the way we walk, etc., these are the factors that will determine whether or not we could be targeted. So, if we don’t stay vigilant, we become vulnerable and more likely to end up in some sort of trouble.

Carla has done several G.R.E.A.T. presentations in our community and continues to receive requests to do more. In fact, on April 14th, Carla, in conjunction with physical education teacher Jen Hull and their team of volunteers will present G.R.E.A.T. to all 450 freshmen students at West High School! Please, join us in this cause by helping spread the word or by making a

donation and/or becoming a “G.R.E.A.T. Self-Defense, Inc” sponsor. Together we can help Carla, and her team of volunteers, to continue to present G.R.E.A.T., free of cost, to as many schools, churches, and everywhere else possible in town and in the surrounding areas. Supporting this cause shows that, not only we personally care to be safe and to live in a safe community, but that we also care to help make it happen.

Finally, through G.R.E.A.T. , Carla also offers fitness classes to anyone interested in learning, practicing and training with her. Some of these classes are: “Fit and Fierce” which is a fast-paced fitness class applying martial arts movements or techniques, and stress relieve “HIIT the Pads” class which is theme-related and tailored to, for example, couples only, siblings, mother-son, father-daughter, etc. Carla teaches skills and techniques that are easy-to-learn, easy-to-follow and very effective, regardless of your age or physical conditioning. Heavy bags, shields and all sorts of martial arts equipment are used in these classes to help enhance your training experience. Fitness classes are offered at a very small donation-based rate and all proceedings go to G.R.E.A.T.!

For more information, to schedule a presentation, or to book a fee-based workshop or fitness class, please call Carla Verbsky at (406) 633-1457 or send an email to [greatselfdefensebillings@gmail.com](mailto:greatselfdefensebillings@gmail.com).





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