

## Sky Valley Spotlight Rodriguez Taekwondo Martial Arts



Meet this month's Sky Valley Chamber member highlight, Manny Rodriguez.

He's the proud owner of Rodriguez Taekwondo martial arts, which opened in May 2022 at its Main Street location in Sultan. Despite its modest storefront in a small town, the business is flourishing and will no doubt expand soon as the classes grow. Of course, you might think starting and operating a successful small business during a pandemic at only 24 years old is impressive. Still, when you meet Manny, you quickly realize he's the kind of person who can probably do pretty much anything. To say he is "charismatic" doesn't do him justice; an aura of genuine humility tempers his bright smile and a strong handshake. He knows how to balance seriousness and humor while teaching his craft- and this method tends to entrance even the most distractible kids. He treats each student with patience and care and teaches them the importance of family, home rules, and life skills alongside martial arts.

Rodriguez works tirelessly for his pupils, modeling the importance of a good work ethic, a trait inspired by his mother and father. "I was a bratty teenager!" he eagerly revealed as we sat down to talk. "I got into hanging out with the wrong crowd," he said. "I tried other sports, and I didn't like them. Then when I was 13, I tried Taekwondo and was hooked. My Sa Bum Nim (teacher) was tough on me, but it was good, and what martial arts does is it teaches you that nothing worthwhile comes easy, you know?". When I asked Manny what his biggest goals are for himself, he responded simply with this: "Growing up, martial arts had such a huge impact on my life, and if I can do that even for a few kids, that's my main goal. At the end of the day, I just want to impact people's lives for the better here in the community." And he does that nearly every day, even recently on his 24th birthday. "There's nowhere I'd rather be." he shared on social media along with some photos from the day, images full of the smiling faces of his students, a few of whom may someday be a part of the competition team he hopes to build. And who knows, maybe your child could be a part of that team someday- I know my son wishes to be! Rodriguez Taekwondo prides itself on being accessible to everyone by offering generous pricing and flexibility.

If you, your child, or someone you know may be interested in learning more about taekwondo, Manny encourages you to drop in during one of his many classes to observe and see how taekwondo could enrich your life. You'd be hard-pressed to find a better teacher and role model. We are proud to have Rodriguez Taekwondo as a member of our Chamber and our beloved Sky Valley.

~Katharine Pennock- Sky Valley Chamber Ambassador