

Defense class aids values

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On April 15, nine girls stood in line in front of Pomerantz Stage as Drake Taekwondo Instructor Jerel Krueger began to tell a story about a college class he took.

In this class, female and male students both had to write the ways they would defend themselves against an attack on each side of a white board.

"The girls' side was obviously way longer," Krueger said.

Krueger wrote taekwondo on the board as one of the ways that he protects himself. A girl in Krueger's class then asked him how that would help her. "Sixteen years ago I didn't have an answer, but now I do," Krueger said. "I am here to give you those tools for your toolbox."

Nine girls then began the self-defense class, which was one part of Drake Greek Life Values Week hosted by Panhellenic Council.

Other events included a sexual assault seminar, study tables and a screening of the documentary "The Hunting Grounds."

One of the main goals of the week was to bring more awareness to sexual assault. This seminar was a way of doing so.

"I think it was just really great for the community, especially with all the sexual assault that is getting put on the Greek community, to say 'hey, we are fighting back against this,'" said Jeorgie Smith, vice president of business management for the Panhellenic Council.

Panhellenic Council partnered with the Drake Taekwondo club to put on the seminar in order to teach safety to the women of the Panhellenic community.

"Knowing self-defense, especially in this neighborhood, makes me feel more comfortable at night knowing that I can take

care of myself," Taekwondo club President Danielle McKay said.

"Not that that doesn't mean I don't take precautions, but I am not as scared."

In order to make the women feel more comfortable, all of the moves that were taught were directly related to if someone tried to grab them.

Most of the women had already taken a self-defense class before, but still found this one to be helpful.

"I went to the Drake Public Safety one last year, but it is good to have a refresher and always remember to be on the look out and be safe," sophomore Brenna Cox said. For others, this class helped out even more than previous classes.

"I don't think anything has ever stuck this well," Smith said. "Being able to actually try it out with someone who can correct you when you are doing it wrong really gave me tools to use."

Although this was a special seminar, Taekwondo club meets every Monday and Wednesday from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church on University Ave. Practices are free and open to the public.

The seminar, like one of the goals of Taekwondo club, aimed to help prepare girls for "unfriendly" situations, as Krueger stated.

"It is not necessarily going to happen to everybody, but statistics show that it happens to quite a few women even just in their college careers, let alone their whole life," McKay said.

"Giving people these techniques gives them a lot of confidence to prepare themselves for that kind of situation, so they are not as scared."

Those nine girls left Olmsted Center on Wednesday with more confidence and techniques to take on situations they may encounter throughout their lives.

They added more tools to their toolboxes.