

## Meet Tiffany Richards

Written by Sarah Love

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As co-owner of Peaceful Warrior, a martial arts school, Tiffany Richards focuses on her energy levels, spiritually and physically every day. Richards began her career working with artists as their personal massage therapists; in 1998, when she toured with Cirque du Soleil. Eventually, that turned into her starting the Rub Company and Peaceful Warrior. Keeping her in shape and focused, Richards credits martial arts as an integral part of her life. Richards is collaborating with Dr. Dan Short to start the ME, the Mental & Martial Enrichment Program, for kids with ADHD beginning on January 23, 2012.



### **Arizona Foothills Magazine: How did you discover martial arts? When did you get started?**

Tiffany Richards: I grew up in a very small town, Page/Lake Powell, and was always drawn to watching martial arts, especially Bruce Lee movies. Page didn't have instruction in martial arts. As soon as I graduated high school, I moved to Phoenix and joined a dojo.

### **AFM: In your career, it is significant to be healthy. What is your approach to nutrition?**

TR: I try to eat five to six small meals each day (which doesn't always happen!) and never drink my calories – no soda, sports drinks, etc. Lots of water is key.

### **AFM: What's the biggest challenge for you in your work?**

TR: I hate to see kids struggle. There are some kids who have been with us since we started Peaceful Warrior, and some who have trained with Sensei [Richard] Poage for eight years. To see kids grow is amazing but watching the struggles they go through like bullying, changing schools, losing friends or basic growing pains is hard for me. I want to protect them all but I know that this is just a part of life. These kids have to go through it to grow and learn.

### **AFM: What was the process you had to go through in creating Peaceful Warrior, along with Richard Poage?**

TR: Sensei Poage had owned a previous karate school for eight years and had many loyal students. We started Peaceful Warrior with the intent of building a community. We wanted a place that was a family, who strove to support, develop and encourage all around growth in its students.

### **AFM: In three words, describe your lifestyle?**

TR: My lifestyle is high-energy, focused and never boring.

### **AFM: What is your favorite type of martial arts to teach or work with? Any favorite moves?**

TR: There are many aspects to martial arts training – kata/forms, weapons, sparring, groundwork, etc. I like teaching self-defense techniques the best. We do a lot of role-playing at the dojo with the kids, like simulating an adult trying to grab them. It's awesome when the kids use the techniques I've taught them.

### **AFM: What are your goals in the future involving Peaceful Warrior or martial arts?**

TR: Nearly one in 10 United States kids are diagnosed with ADD/ADHD (five percent of American children). We just started a program designed for kids with ADD/ADHD called ME: Mental & Martial Enrichment. We have had so many kids come to the dojo who specifically need help with focus, discipline, accountability and to harness all of that extra energy. Our goal is to launch ME nationally in 2012 so that kids from all over the country can use martial arts as a way to combat some of their issues and see what they are really capable of.

### **AFM: Why did you choose martial arts as a career?**

TR: Martial arts is definitely a lifestyle, not a hobby, for me. It's a love of the culture, the discipline, dedication, respect, physicality and all of the components as a whole. It encompasses my entire outlook on natural healing modalities and well-being. I couldn't see myself doing anything different.

### **AFM: What advice do you have for AZFoothills.com readers on living a healthy and active lifestyle?**

TR: Find something you love to do. People are always trying to lose weight or exercise. It's not about forcing yourself to go to the gym if you hate going to the gym. Once you find something that you love like getting out in nature and hiking, joining a kickball league or practicing martial arts, the health part follows.

### **AFM: Tell us about Peaceful Warrior and why we need to check it out.**

TR: Peaceful Warrior isn't just another karate school. We are a center that works to build character, values and leaders. Anyone can teach anyone to kick and punch. Here it's not about the martial arts style or even the belt. It is about the life lessons students are taking home at the end of every day.

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### **AFM: What prompted you to start this ADHD program and how do you think it will help these kids?**

TR: We've had many parents come through our doors and tell us, 'my kid has ADD/ADHD and I don't know where else to turn. We've tried everything and they aren't themselves on meds.' During our last Summer Camp, about 25 percent of the kids (out of 200 within 11 weeks) had been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD. We knew that this was something we could help with and teamed up with Dr. Short who co-designed the ME Program with specific methodologies and techniques that:

1. Develop mental function and brain growth.
2. Teach adaptive strategies that transfer to the outside world, home, school and extra curricular activities.
3. Increase self-esteem by teaching children to value their mental and physical capabilities and who they are as a person. Children will learn to believe in themselves.
4. Teach martial arts material so that students can test for their first belt and work into a martial arts program with pride of accomplishment.

Click [here](#) to go to Peaceful Warrior's website.

Click [here](#) to email Tiffany.