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COLUMBIA TAEKWONDO SCHOOLS CELEBRATE TENTH ANNIVERSARY - 11/8/2004

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Columbia Taekwondo Schools Celebrate Tenth Anniversary

Columbia, Mo. – Time flies when you're having fun, and ten years flew quickly as Hockman's ATA Black Belt Academy taught thousands of Columbians to kick and punch their way to fitness and self-defense.

Hockman's opened its doors officially in November 1994. Since that time, Hockman's two schools in Columbia have taught the ancient Korean martial art of Taekwondo to more than 2,500 students and have developed more than 500 Black Belts, who are the most serious students of the discipline.

Owners Jeff and Jade Hockman, both of whom are past silver medalists in national competition, have trained seven world champions and numerous top ten competitors. Brothers Jeff and Jade Hockman, respectively, are fifth-degree and fourth-degree black belts and are members of the National Association of Professional Martial Artists.

"Jade and I try to maintain the philosophy that we develop quality students who feel good about themselves," Jeff Hockman said. "As long as we accomplish this goal, business is easy."

The Hockmans lead a local instruction staff that includes Fourth-Degree Black Belt Mike Witt, Third-Degree Black Belt Susan Zarn and numerous other certified instructors, trainee instructors and junior leader instructors.

Hockman's offers programs for children and adults, and all of his instructors are certified. Besides traditional Taekwondo for adults, Hockman's programs include Tiny Tigers, for ages 3 to 6; Karate for Kids, for ages 6 to 14; Leadership Training; Protech training in such skills as Tai Chi, martial arts weapons and self-defense; and cardioKickboxing at the Broadway Marketplace location.

His children's programs focus on mental development as much as physical, teaching life skills such as focus, discipline and confidence. For instance, in children's classes, stars are awarded and worn on the uniform for improved grades in school; participation in Taekwondo tournaments or other sports; and for monthly written assignments, weekly To-Do Lists or Tiny Tiger coloring pages.

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“Taekwondo is more than a sport; it's a discipline honed over centuries in Korea and adapted for students in this country by the American Taekwondo Association,” Hockman said. “Anybody at any age or ability level can do it. The goal is self-improvement. If the student works hard and improves him- or herself, the student brings honor to the school.”

After earning his first-degree black belt in 1988, Jeff received his instructor certification from the American Taekwondo Association a year later and opened his first Taekwondo school in 1990 in his hometown of Centralia. He opened his first Columbia location in 1994, now located in the Broadway Marketplace, and opened the second Columbia location, now located on Buttonwood Drive, two years later.

Jade operated the Centralia school after Jeff left for Columbia in 1994, took over management of the Buttonwood location in 1996, and purchased Jeff's share of the school two years later. The move enabled both brothers to each focus on developing the students in one particular school, which they believe was better for the students.

Jeff opened a school in Fulton in 2002 and helped students open locations in Centralia, Lake Ozark, Hannibal, Quincy, Palmyra and Monroe City.

Established in 1969, the ATA is the world's largest centrally administered martial arts system. Its family consists of more than 130,000 men, women and children training in Songahm Taekwondo at more than 800 schools and clubs across the United States. The ATA is the founding organization of other international affiliates that include the World Traditional Taekwondo Union (WTTU) and the Songahm Taekwondo Federation (STF). These branches include some 16 countries, offering instruction to more than 30,000 students.

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