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People's Association

Transforming lives through silat

Trainer Khaizuran Ahmad Salleh makes a positive impact on his students by passing on the heritage and skill of this martial art

Fizal (not his real name) used to mix with the wrong company but saw the error of his ways and decided to change for the better. It was silat Guru Utama (grand master) Khaizuran Ahmad Salleh who helped him turn over a new leaf through this martial art.

Mr Khaizuran inculcated values and got Fizal busy with training for competitions so he did not have time to mix with bad company. Fizal has never looked back since.

Much ado about silat

Mr Khaizuran, 38, is a People's Association (PA) Trainer and teaches the Malay martial art at several Community Clubs (CC) in Singapore.

He says: "To me, silat is not just a sport. It is a holistic system of mental and physical discipline and constitution. Silat focuses on both the internal and external development of a person. Practising this martial art will cultivate discipline, patriotism and morals, for our first takeaway is always about values like respect and honour."

His love affair with silat began when he was 10 and his father sent him for personal training at a friend's house.

Just three years later, he was winning medals in competitions such as the National Pencak Silat Championship, Sidek Saniff Cup, Inter-Community Centre Silat Competition and President's Cup during the early 1990s.

Throughout the years when he was in school and even during National Service, his dedication and passion to his art was unwavering — he continued to train at least three times a week.

Passing it on

His decision to teach seemed like a natural development, as he wanted to pass on the skills, knowledge and values to the next generation.

He says: "Silat is an essential part of the Malay heritage, with its rich ethics, customs and traditions. It is akin to an heirloom of the Malay race."

It seemed like it was the right time for him

to give back to the community, just as his teachers who guided him to be a trainer did.

He cites that the growing popularity of modern sports — such as mixed martial arts — has seen class numbers of martial arts like silat and taekwondo drop. Mr Khaizuran sees it as his responsibility, as "heir to the art" to promote it and encourage the next generation to take it up.

"In this manner, silat will never become extinct as an art or a culture," he says.

Even though he has taught in both CCs and private schools, he enjoys teaching in CCs more as they are "conducive and accessible". This, coupled with the affordability of the courses at CCs, tends to attract participants from all walks of life from different ethnic backgrounds, making classes a more engaging and fun affair.

Going the extra mile

His students range from teenagers to working adults who clearly love learning from him.

"Our class is like a big happy family with lots of fun," says Ms Elyna Lee, 18. "We motivate one another when we face any challenge. This is the culture Mr Khaizuran has inculcated. He inspires, motivates and empowers us to reach our peak performance."



Participants appreciate the dedication shown by Mr Khaizuran.



Mr Khaizuran sees it as his responsibility to ensure silat never becomes extinct and does his bit to promote the sport. PHOTOS: PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION

Says Mr Irwan Arsek, 45: "Mr Khaizuran is a very dedicated, earnest and diligent Trainer with compassion and passion."

As a dedicated Trainer with boundless energy and enthusiasm, Mr Khaizuran also understands how to motivate and have fun with his students.

Outside classes, he also organises outings such as barbecues, dinners and treks for his students to form deeper friendships with each other.

"Of all the Trainers I have known and worked with, Mr Khaizuran stands out distinctively from the rest. He is truly unique and inspirational. He displays great passion, positivity and patience in what he does. Dis-

playing great vision, he transfers it to all his students and peers wholeheartedly. He dares to sail on uncharted waters and his intuition is always on point. Others just love to work with him. He is charismatic, creative and is committed to give the best, always," says Mr lthnin Khamis, 50, parent of a participant.

Mr Khaizuran says: "The best part of teaching has always been nurturing and grooming my participants, not only as a martial artist, but also holistically as a person in fitness, health and, most importantly, character.

"One of the most enjoyable moments is to witness my participants growing from someone with low self-esteem to one with confidence."

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