

## **Muay Thai Martial Arts**

By Josh Cassidy, Sports Supervisor

One big surprise we had from the recreation survey was your keen interest in martial arts programming. Martial Arts was by far your most requested programming option.

To be candid, the thought of offering Martial Arts programming made us a little nervous! It is not something the MPCC has considered in the past. The skills and techniques that children learn while in martial arts classes carry serious consequences if used improperly. Ensuring that children are not only safe during the class, but while in their homes and out on the playgrounds is so important to us.

Enter stage left – Sara and Nicholas from BIGODE Martial Arts. We stumbled (quite literally!) across Sara and Nicholas as they were teaching classes at Manor Park School. These two are young, hip, cool and seriously know their stuff. Nich and Sara really have crafted themselves a great gym with a fantastic product.

Sara and Nich will be bringing their creative approach teaching Muay Thai to our community.

Fun fact: Nich is known around martial arts circles for his big moustache. In Portuguese, BIGODE means ‘moustache’, so Nich literally wears their brand on his upper lip!

Muay Thai, which originates from Thailand, is traditionally a full contact sport, but in our program children will learn basic Muay Thai moves -- punches, kicks, clinch -- in a friendly and safe environment. It is an art that is known for its discipline and for building self esteem. Children develop respect for themselves, others and the environment. Children develop their coordination by practicing basic moves in traditional martial arts. They will also learn to integrate different combinations of move to help develop agility and accomplish new techniques.

What impressed us the most about BIGODE is the serious emphasis on safety and responsibility. Sara and Nicholas take care to ensure that their students are not only safe while in the program, but carry that sense of safety and responsibility with them once they leave the gym. BIGODE has developed their own core values, code of conduct, and certification system for students. These are at the heart of BIGODEs inclusive, fun and active programming.

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