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Operator Francisco Reyes gets a one-on-one lesson from Grand Master Lee in how to practice T'ai Ji.



Photos by Sarah Winfrey

## East Meets West

- Ancient Chinese Martial Art Helps Relax Division 2 Employees

By SARAH WINFREY

(July 25, 2006) Peace and relaxation are all in a day's work for the employees of Crossroads Depot Division 2. Each Tuesday between the 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. they're treated to a pilot program of T'ai Ji lessons and massages.

T'ai Ji (pronounced *Tie Chee*) was originally used in China as a martial art and later became a practice that promotes relaxation and relieving stress. Typically, T'ai Ji uses slow methodical hand and body movements and incorporates health, meditation and the martial arts.

Grand Master Tin-Pang Lee has studied Wu Dang, a specific style of T'ai Ji that focuses on the traditional Taoist martial arts used by Chinese Monks. He has more than 30 years of experience in Wu Dang T'ai Ji.

Moving from his native Hong-Kong to the U.S., he now travels between the two counties, going back to China several times a year where he still operates his studio. In the U.S., he travels to different places to teach Wu Dang T'ai Ji.

At Division 2, Grand Master Lee holds two sessions to accommodate Metro employees who want to participate.

"It really helps me relax when I drive," says Operator Eric Anderson, who has been going to the sessions for about a month. "It really helps the back."

Lee's son, Joe, translates his father's instructions and helps with teaching the martial art while his daughter, Leslie, provides massages for those in need of back, neck and shoulder relief.

**Skeptical at first**

"I was skeptical because at first no one wanted to get a massage until I tried it," Operator Francisco Reyes says. "It works!"

Lee and his son helped Operator Jose Ramos, who injured his hand, by showing him hand exercises that would help strengthen and improve motion.

"I do the T'ai Ji hand exercises when I'm stopped at a red light," Ramos says, "I notice more alertness, concentration and confidence."

Recently undergoing shoulder surgery, Division Transportation Manager Thom Pelk regained movements in his shoulder by following Lee's guidance and T'ai Ji exercises.

The pilot program was created by Alex Clifford, general manager of the Gateway Cities sector, working with Pelk. The program began in May and is scheduled to last for four months.



Operators Eric Anderson (left) and Martin Price stand in position as Joe Lee, Grand Master Lee's son, explains what to do next.



Metro employees await the start of their weekly lesson in T'ai Ji.



Grand Master Lee shows a fascinated Operator Jose Ramos how he can improve the range of motion in his hands with a simple exercise.

Pelk hopes to extend the pilot program to a year since employees are responding positively to it.

"We pride ourselves in being innovative," he says.

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