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Officer to instruct kids in self-defense

Service to others also on program

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Kids as young as 6 can head to the Redlands Community Center next month to learn the art of self-defense.

Redlands police Officer Alex Paredes will offer a street-smart self-defense program at the community center starting in October.

The brainchild of Paredes, the program will consist of four-week sessions meeting 3:15 to 4:30 p.m. every Tuesday, with the aim of teaching kids how to be good witnesses, avoid and prevent crime and become good citizens with an emphasis on martial arts.

"We want to be role models for the kids and to help them become role models themselves," said Paredes, a fifth-degree certified instructor in Chang Moo Kwan Tae Kwon Do. "We want them to be leaders in their groups, their neighborhoods and their families."

Police Chief Jim Bueermann likes the idea of his police officers coming up with ideas to serve the community.

"We've got a lot of creative officers here,"

Bueermann said. "Some of the best ideas come from the bottom up, from our people at the point of service that know what programs we need and what programs will work. It's my job to help cultivate and facilitate these ideas."

Paredes stressed that the class will not simply revolve around the instruction of self-defense, but that the kids will be required to be involved in the community.

A "C" average will be required to take the class, and the youths will participate in community service activities. Kids ages 6 years old through high school are eligible.

There will be a fee in order to take the class, but scholarships will be offered, and no one will be turned away.

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