

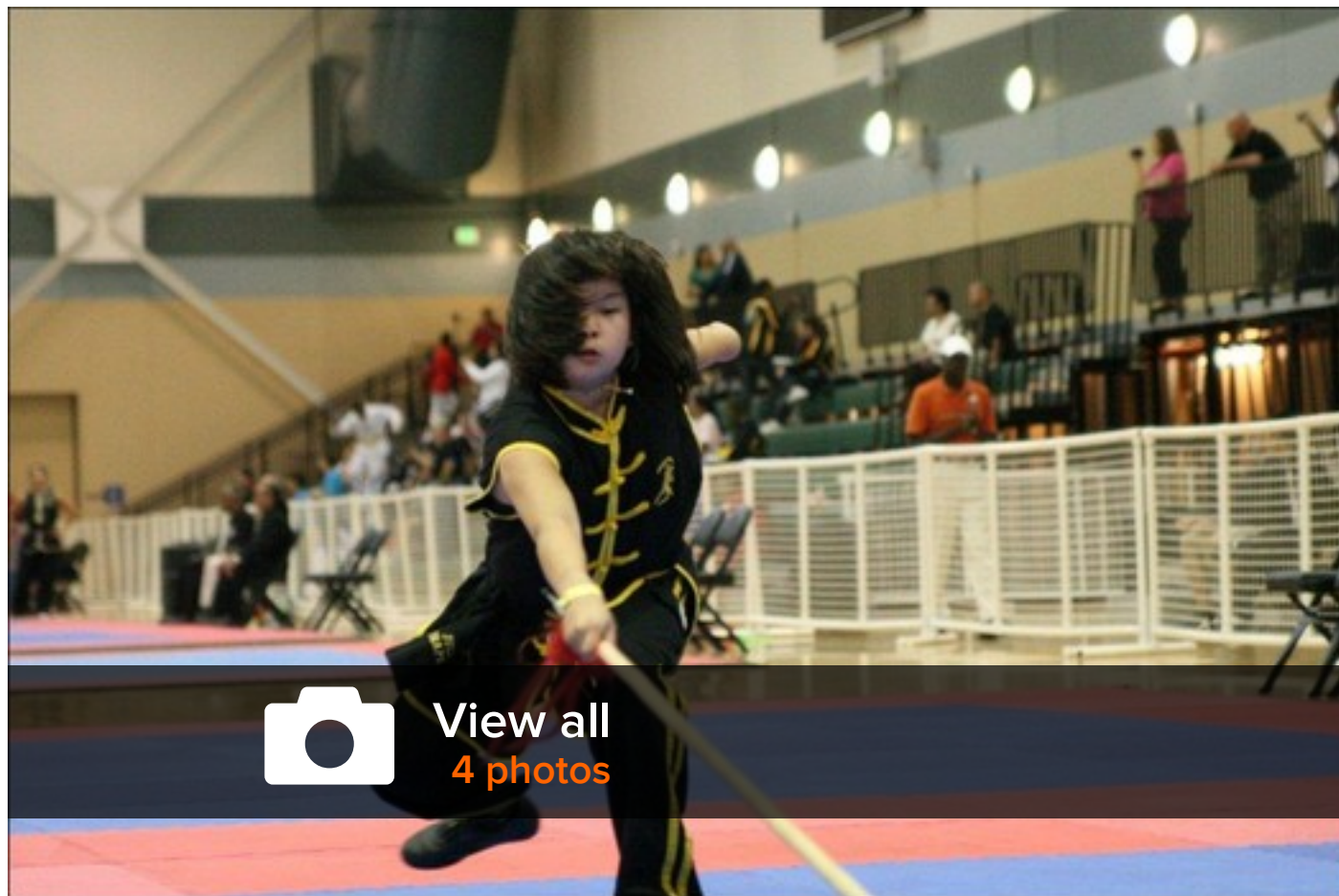
SPORTS / RECREATION / GENERAL RECREATION

Beast from the East

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Growing up in an orphanage in China until 8 months, Julie missed some growing opportunities. But this tiny girl was not going to be bullied by the American kids in her new daycare. She fearlessly defended herself. Henceforth, her adoptive mother Penny Drapkin proudly nicknamed her “Beast from the East”. Penny never thought that Julie would be famously known as “Beast from the East” in the [martial arts](#) community.



Julie and a spear (1)
Penny Drapkin



Penny Drapkin

At age 4, Julie visited a Karate studio, and started her martial arts career. She switched to [Kung Fu](#) a few months later with the hope that she could be a Kung Fu master like Jackie Chan someday.

She has studied from Shifu John Vanegas and other instructors at [Northern Shaolin Eagle Claw Kung Fu at Shaolin Kung Fu Academy](#) in Pembroke Pines, Florida and has learned bare hand forms of Eagle Claw, Chang Quan (long fist), Southern fist, [Shaolin](#) Arhat, Monkey, Drunken, Tiger, and Ching Li Quan and weapon forms of whip chain, kwan dao, Southern sword/nandao, broadsword (a few forms), double broadsword, tiger hooks, sword and shield, spear, staff, daggers, etc. Her favorite style is Shaolin, her favorite form Arhat, and her favorite weapon the Kwan Dao. She takes 5 or 6 classes a week and practices for 1 to 2 hours on her own each day.

When asked what the hardest part of learning [Wushu](#) is, Julie said that it is not when she got cut when practicing Nando and got 12 stitches but rather the challenge of balancing her schoolwork and Wushu. So far, Julie has been successfully accomplished both, she has maintained straight-A GPA academically and has participated in Kung Fu tournaments since she was six. In seven years, she has won about 20 trophies/plaques and 70 medals, including multi-time Grand Champions and two-time National Champions in the [International Chinese Martial Arts Championship Circuit](#), [KICK USA Karate Tournament](#), and [US Open Karate Tournament](#), [Martial Arts Foundation – Open Tournament](#).

Julie said Wushu is a great way to get in shape, meet friends, and have a lot of fun. She wants to join law enforcement when grows up. Studying Wushu has helped her build confidence and leadership. Shifu Vanegas states that his school emphasizes Wu Der (martial art ethnics) development, which is an important characteristic of a law enforcement officer. At [Northern Shaolin Eagle Claw Kung Fu at](#)

Shaolin Kung Fu Academy, students also have to learn how to effectively communicate. Since Julie is a senior Kung Fu practitioner, she has been made an instructor. She teaches kids as well as adults. According to Julie, adults normally work harder than kids and are easier to teach. Nevertheless, she has more common interests with kids and can relate to kids better, so it is more fun for her to work with kids.

Even though she is well accomplished in the martial arts area and has been invited to perform at Masters Demos at International Chinese Martial Arts Tournaments, Miami Heat, Mega TV, Pines Police Dept., Kiwanis, South Florida Asia Group and many other major events, Julie is very modest and thinks that she still has a lot to learn.

You can see some of Julie's demo either on the left-hand-side video or via the links below:

- Nandao: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMsL4jGqWwM>
- Traditional Spear: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdbwmlnwVbc&feature=related>
- Whip Chain: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z90uLQJX-aA>
- Masters Demo (Julie is second performer from her school and did broadsword):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87HT8ys4BPE>

Now you can follow me on Twitter <http://twitter.com/#!/TaichiExaminer> .

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Violet Li

St. Louis Tai Chi Examiner

