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*For Immediate Release:*



Featured in the photo: (Front) Domi Tomate; (Left to Right, Middle Row) Malorie Shanahan, Eddie Yubeta, Jay Hardy; (Left to Right, Back Row) Kathy Steller, Teresa Ishiki, Vanessa Robertson.

## **Hardy employees enjoy tai chi at work**

By Times Staff

Hardy Diagnostics, which encourages its employees to participate in healthy lifestyles, is now offering tai chi sessions to workers every morning.

Domi Tomate, a tai chi follower since 1975, began working at the Santa Maria company last September and volunteered his services as a tai chi instructor, said a company spokesman.

Employees can join the tai chi group from 9:45 to 10 a.m. on their morning breaks.

Tomate said doing the exercise in a group setting is how many Chinese communities around the world practice their morning martial arts rituals.

When in a group, individuals can observe and learn from each other, he explained.

Tai chi, a martial arts form, is often performed to balance “chi,” or energy, throughout the body. The series of gentle movements, or qigong, encourages “energy cultivation,” Tomate said.

There also are physical benefits to practicing tai chi. Tomate said he dropped to 185 pounds from 205 pounds after resuming his martial arts training five years ago.

Many people who practice tai chi claim it lowers stress and anxiety levels, lowers hypertension and allows them to sleep better.

Tai chi is just one component of Hardy’s program to promote healthy lifestyles among employees, the spokesman said. A few months ago, Hardy was the first company on the Central Coast to be certified by the American Heart Association as a “Fit Friendly Workplace.”

That award was featured in the October issue of Forbes magazine.

Hardy also sponsors a walking program, offers healthy food choices in its lunch room, conducts an annual health fair and offers discounted gym memberships.

Hardy Diagnostics manufactures over 2,000 products used for the culture and identification of bacteria and fungi, including rapid test kits.

The company also distributes more than 12,000 microbiology and laboratory supply items from 75 other diagnostic manufacturers.

Hardy’s team of microbiologists and medical technologists also provide technical assistance to customers.

For more information, visit [www.hardydiagnostics.com](http://www.hardydiagnostics.com).