

The Pacific Martial Arts offers the best in traditional karate training. The program is based on helping one another develop. Visitors remark on the sincerity and mutual respect that is so evident. New members are quickly assimilated into the group and are given the special attention they require.

One aspect of the P M A that creates bonding is the emphasis on special activities. During the year there are tournaments, mountain camps, tea ceremonies, self-defense clinics, demonstrations and outdoor classes. Juniors have special overnight training camps while seniors have traveled to various cities for seminars and tournaments such as Las Vegas, Chicago, Miami, Boise, Portland, etc.

Within the dojo there are junior and senior libraries for use. Films and seminars are frequently given. Special events such as holiday parties, scholarship awards, tournaments, camps, and black belt promotion celebrations are held. A major goal of all these activities is to allow students to relate to other people through a shared activity.

But what about the training itself? It is conducted in an atmosphere of strict courtesy and adherence to safety. The student is never allowed to forget he or she is learning a martial art, a way of strong physical action so attitude becomes very important. It does not take long to develop physical strength and coordination. The PMA karate program is unique in its stress on the mental development of the student who must quickly learn that karate is not a sport and that he is being given knowledge and skills that must be used for the good of the community.

Karate is not a sport but a lifelong pursuit. In most sports, success is measured by a score. After a match, a player goes home and boasts that his team beat another team. Losing doesn't often take into account that the team enjoyed itself, or perhaps played well, or that the players developed from the experience. In karate, one competes with himself. Growth is an individual choice. Belts are awarded periodically to signify to the karate student that certain levels of proficiency have been attained. However, at the end of a hard training session, the student doesn't go home with a sense of defeat because he lost that day or worse, a sense of superiority because he defeated someone by a large score. He is more likely to reflect on how much better his front kick was that evening.

Karate begins and ends with courtesy. Traditional training permits development of a student's inner potential the history of the martial ways goes back many centuries and what was once a relatively secretive activity is now open for all to derive the many benefits. It is definitely a challenge and perhaps not for everyone but trying is the pleasure. There is much to be gained and nothing to be lost no matter how short a time the involvement.

Jerry Devine

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