

Smooth Transitions

... and in Reaching Your Goals!

The *Okinawan Karate School* offers a variety of classes for individuals of different interests, ages and abilities. Whether starting a new program, or moving from one program to another, it is important for students to make a smooth and successful transition. Below are some guidelines to help with the transition process.

New Students

It is important for new students to familiarize themselves with the rules, etiquette and terminology of the dojo. They should feel free to seek help from senior students and instructors regarding any questions they may have. Beginning students usually find new or existing friends who can help, too. The dojo has some resources available to help the new student including:

- a **Welcome** sheet with helpful information for the all new students,
- a **General Knowledge** sheet for karate students with history, terminology and other information,
- a **Test Sheet/Study Guide** for each age level in the karate programs.

Students and parents should also familiarize themselves with tuition and payment policies to avoid any misunderstandings in that area. Remember to keep track of tuition dues dates.

Fitness Issues

Many students begin a martial arts program partly for its fitness value. When they start, they may need to deal with fitness challenges including cardio vascular deficiencies, flexibility issues, strength deficiencies, and nutrition/ weight control issues. It is important for the student to gradually improve these traits over time, by simply doing the best that they can in each class. It is most important for the student to develop the fitness habits that martial arts training has to offer. Beginning a martial arts program will enable the student to transition to a whole new level of fitness.

Full vs. Partial participation

For young students, ages three to eight, the *Okinawan Karate School* offers a Partial Participation option. This is designed to best address the needs of students of the Cranes, Junior Tigers and Tigers programs. These programs emphasize repetition of basics and less complex drills and activities appropriate to each age group. For students aged nine and above (Dragons program and higher) students are taught more complex techniques and strategies. More emphasis is placed on the development of the mind, body and spirit and the achievement of rank as a result of progress in those areas. The industry standard of Full Participation is mandatory for this level of training.

Teens vs. Adults Programs

Students aged thirteen and up should attend Adult programs at the *Okinawan Karate School*. The



Adult program is a controlled environment where students at this difficult age can build confidence and grounding, needed to cope with life changes presented during the teen years. Most students this age are of a physical size and maturity appropriate for Adult programs. The Adult karate program is also necessary for the preparation of advanced rankings in Uechi/ Shohei-Ryu.

Karate Programs

Karate classes are divided into six different programs grouped by student ages. The program designations are based on time-tested principles regarding the developmental abilities of students as they progress through their life stages. It is important that youth and parents follow the program designation

assigned to the student by the head instructors in order to maximize the student's martial arts experience. Karate programs are as follows:

Cranes (ages 3 to 5) - This program uses martial arts games and activities to teach the youngest students dojo etiquette, learning skills and self control. Repetition of martial arts basics are also mixed in. Students are rewarded with stars in a "star system" for successful attendance and behavior. Partial Participation is mandatory for this age group.

Jr. Tigers (ages 5 to 6) - Students are introduced to a more structured environment in these classes with an emphasis on martial arts games and activities, and some traditional learning exercises. Students begin to earn belt ranks for attendance, behavior and skill development. Partial Participation is recommended for this age group.

Tigers (ages 6 to 8) - Tigers students enjoy a healthy balance of games, activities and traditional learning. More emphasis is placed on martial arts skills and students earn belt ranks for required attendance, behavior and skill development. Tigers also begin to work more on partner drills. Partial Participation is optional for this age group.

Dragons (ages 9 to 11) - More emphasis is placed on traditional martial arts learning and self-defense in this preteen program. Students are taught to be more self-directed and responsible, and develop leadership skills. More complex material is given to these students, requiring individual practice to become proficient. Students are rewarded with games and activities for their efforts. Students earn belt ranks for required attendance, behavior and martial arts skill development. **Full Participation is mandatory for this and older age groups.**

Teens (ages 12 to 13) - Teen students are given a full regimen of traditional martial arts training with an emphasis on life skills including: fitness, self-discipline, perseverance, leadership, and responsibility. Emphasis is placed on conditioning and self-defense drills, and the ability to work well with others. More advanced self-defense techniques and strategies are covered and students are rewarded with games and activities for their efforts.

Adults (ages 13 and up) - The Adult class format follows those conducted in Okinawa, Japan. Traditional drills and exercises provide the student with complete development of the mind, body and spirit. A typical class includes warm-up exercises, calisthenics, individual and combinations of basics, a form of shadowboxing called "kata", conditioning, prearranged sparring drills and sparring. Additional exercises from boxing, kickboxing and grappling are mixed in for variety. Advanced ranks are issued by the Okinawa Karatedo Association of Okinawa.

Jiu-jitsu Programs

Gracie Jiu-jitsu classes are physically and mentally challenging. Classes typically begin with calisthenics, grappling basics and stretching. Students perform repetition of drills for: standing escapes and submissions, takedowns and throws, positioning on the ground, and escapes and submissions on the ground. Classes usually end with sparring or "rolling" (a freestyle exchange of technique and strategy.) Students work at very close range in order to neutralize an opponent's opportunities to strike. Classes are divided into **Youth** (for ages 8 to 11) and **Adults** (for ages 12 and up.)

Family Support

It is important that students are supported by their parents and family members as much as possible when starting and maintaining a martial arts program. Family members can help younger students in learning terminology, etiquette, and even routines (safely!) Also, students can learn the rules of the dojo and the life skills that they represent better if there is consistency at home. In the dojo, students are encouraged to foster a positive and mutually supportive environment. Modeling positive behavior and attitude for your young students outside of the dojo will go a long way!

