



National Women's Martial Arts Federation



Promoting the involvement of women and girls in the martial arts

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SDIT'08 Conference Presenters

Self Defense Teacher Training

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Geneva, New York

July 16-17, 2008

"Tools for Transformation and Healing"

Conference Coordinators



Anne Kuzminsky, 6th degree black belt in Zujitsu, has studied various martial arts and self-defense systems since 1976. She is an NWMAF certified self-defense instructor and an inductee as Master Instructor of the Year - Self-Defense, in the World Head of Family Sokeship Council Hall of Fame. Anne teaches self-defense and martial arts in Rhode Island, and is honored to be part of the 2008 Pre-ST Conference coordinating team. She has found networking with the remarkable women involved with Pre-ST to be such a rewarding part of the conference planning process. Her young children inspire her to continue this anti-violence education work.



Crystal Middlestadt directs the training and education programs at the Colorado Anti-Violence Program (CAVP) in Denver. CAVP works to eliminate violence within and against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer community. Crystal is working to finalize a self-defense curriculum for the LGBTQ community. She is honored to have been trained in women's self-defense by Nadia Telsey at the University of Oregon from 2000-2003, and is working to be certified by NWMAF this year. She is an active member of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Sexual Assault Prevention State Team, and is very excited to serve on the 2008 Pre-ST Conference planning team!

Session Facilitators and Panelists



Janet Aalfs, a 7th degree black belt, has been director since 1982 of Valley Women's Martial Arts: Institute for Healing and Violence Prevention Strategies, founded in 1977, and located in Easthampton, Massachusetts. Janet Co-Chairs the NWMAF Self-Defense Instructor Certification Board, and is a former Secretary, Chair, and a Founding Member of NWMAF. The arts she practices and teaches include Shuri-ryu Karate, Modern Arnis, Tai chi, Qigong, Poetry, and Peace. Her writing has been published widely, and she was the Poet Laureate of Northampton, Massachusetts from 2003 to 2005.



Lauren Benjamin, a Bay Area native who was born in Oakland and raised in San Jose, California, is an active arts educator and advocate for youth empowerment and violence prevention. Lauren currently works with Destiny Arts, providing dance and violence prevention instruction to at-risk youth in Oakland public high schools. She also works for many other organizations, including Eastside Arts Alliance, Mission Dance & Performing Arts, and Oakland Asian Educational Services (OASES). Lauren's motivation is to use teaching as a platform to give students tools and strategies to survive, succeed and express themselves in life. In order to do this she strives to be the best female example that she can possibly be. She realized her desire was to impact people the same way she had been affected by many of her own teachers. One of Lauren's high school dance teachers first gave her the opportunity to teach at seventeen years old, and she has been teaching ever since. She is a member of four dance companies: Phoenix Dance Co., BASIC Contemporary Jazz Collective, Traci Bartlow's Starchild Dance Company, and Love Center Praise Dancers.



Bryia Daniels has been involved in youth anti-violence education and martial arts since the age of 3 with Destiny Arts. As a martial artist she has already enjoyed a successful tournament career. She is a 5 time California AAU Tae Kwon Do point sparring champion. Her other recognitions include AAU National Japanese Karate sparring champion, AAU National Tae Kwon Do silver medalist, and Association of Martial Arts Promoters competitor of the year in Chinese forms. Aside from martial arts, Bryia also enjoys praise dancing and competing in regional and national competitions. She is also an assistant instructor at Destiny Arts Center. She continues to work towards her black belt.



Darlene DeFour, a native of Harlem, New York, graduated from Fisk University and received her doctorate from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Hunter College of the City University of New York. In addition to her work as a research psychologist, Darlene has been training in the martial arts for more than 25 years. She is a 9th degree Black Belt in San Yama Bushi Ryu Ju-jutsu, the first and only woman in the system to hold this rank. She also holds a 2nd degree black belt in Shotokan karate. She is currently the Chief Ju-jutsu instructor at the Harlem School of Ju-jutsu and Self Defense.



Michele Elefante is the head instructor of the Okinawan Karate Club of San Francisco. She has trained in the martial arts for over 16 years and holds the rank of 3rd degree black belt. Michele has a Masters of Science in clinical psychology, and works as a mental health therapist in San Francisco. She has conducted numerous workshops on personal safety and self-defense throughout the Bay area, working with all genders and ages. She is also an instructor for DESTINY Arts, teaching violence prevention and conflict resolution to youths ages 3-18 both onsite at DESTINY Arts and in the Oakland public schools through Project Destiny Arts. Michele has been a trainer at both NWMAF Special Training and PAWMA training camps.



Janet Gee is a 7th degree black belt with an extensive background as a self-defense instructor. Chosen by the San Francisco Bay Guardian newspaper as the best self-defense instructor in the San Francisco Bay area, Janet has taught self-defense to thousands of students in the U.S., Canada, Latin America, Australia, and Europe. Living in the multicultural community that defines the San Francisco Bay area, Janet has become a specialist at teaching self-defense to a diverse population that includes a variety of gender identities and sexual orientations and a wide spectrum of age groups. Janet is a certified rape crisis counselor with the San Francisco Women Against Rape. She is also an adjunct faculty instructor in the Women's Studies program at the City College of San Francisco, and a frequent guest instructor at San Francisco State University and Hasting Law School of the University of California. Janet is an NWMAF

certified self-defense instructor.



Zosia Gorbaty, 8th degree black belt in Zujitsu, has been training in self defense and martial arts since 1976. A physical education department adjunct faculty member teaching self defense since 1983, she formerly taught at Adelphi University, and currently teaches at Queensborough Community College. Zosia was among the first group to complete the certified rape crisis advocate program at Mt. Sinai Hospital in 1984, and volunteered in their ER for several years. She has appeared on numerous TV and radio broadcasts as a self defense expert, and has presented self-defense workshops to thousands for corporations, schools, and private groups over the years. A NWMAF Lifetime member, she served as Board Chair 2002-2003. Zosia is currently a member of NWMAF's Self Defense Instructor Certification Board, and is serving as the Certification Director for the Association of Women Martial Arts Instructors.



Jennifer Lee has been training in the martial arts since 1991, and teaching self-defense since 1997 with Ruckus Safety Awareness (www.makearuckus.org). Jenny has taught self-defense workshops to women and youth of color in the Tri-State area, California, and Georgia. She is a second-generation Korean-American and currently works in New York as a film editor.



Diane Long has taught self-defense in the United States, France, and Morocco for 17 years. She trained in Goju karate and Kuk Sool Won for several years in central Illinois, where she co-founded Women on the Horizon, teaching self-defense and empowerment to women and girls. She later stepped away from formal training due to injuries and chronic pain, but has continued teaching self-defense to diverse populations. Martial arts opened the door to healing arts, first seifukujutsu massage and later other modalities, including Healing Touch, chakra bodywork, yoga and somatic therapies. A background in foreign language education-French and ESL, prepared her to work as an interpreter and bodyworker in a torture treatment center when she moved from France to Minnesota in 2003. Diane strongly believes that self-defense can help people heal from past experiences of trauma and better manage the fears and anxiety associated with PTSD.

She has worked extensively with GLBT youth, teaching sex-positive self-defense and boundary-setting, and has recently begun offering workshops on secondary trauma and self-care for social service agencies. Diane currently lives in Minnesota, where she is pursuing a Master's certificate in Integrative Health and Wellness and national certification in massage therapy. She is eager for the opportunity to share her knowledge and enthusiasm with participants at Pre-ST '08.



Susannah MacKaye lives in Oakland, California with her partner, two cats, two birds, and a tortoise. Her leadership in the Women's Self-Defense movement dates back to 1986, when Susannah co-founded a feminist teaching collective at Stanford University called Women Defending Ourselves (WDO), which later expanded throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Now in its 22nd year, this program has taught thousands of women and trained dozens of others to teach. In 1993 Susannah became Lee Sinclair's Self-Defense teacher in San Francisco, and, as a result, received the wonderful opportunity to help inspire and facilitate an amazing new project: I'M WORTH DEFENDING (IWD), in 2007. With co-teacher Wendi Deetz, Susannah developed a Self-Defense training program for an 8 member instructor team operating out of Korogocho slum, Nairobi.

Susannah approaches Self-Defense from the viewpoint that the key to fighting back effectively is an underlying belief that you are worth defending, and that you can be successful. While focusing on techniques and strategies that are memorable and easy to learn, Susannah encourages students to shift their personal narratives from "I was lucky" to "I was brave, and smart, and strong". She works by day as a licensed clinical social worker in a mental health clinic, and trains in Tae Kwon Do with Master Erica Stone in Berkeley.



Marianna Martinez became a part of the Destiny Arts family at the age of 8 by participating in the martial arts program. As a martial artist, she has been a member of the demo and tournament team and an AAU regional Karate Champion, receiving her black belt in 2006. She currently assists as an instructor for 3-18 year olds at Destiny Arts. In addition to her martial arts, Marianna has also been a performer with the Destiny Youth performance company, a Camp Destiny Counselor, and a Peer Educator for the Multi-ethnic education program in Berkeley. She is completing her freshman year at University of California, Berkeley.



Damie Nazapas is a Bay Area dance teacher who not only educates students in hip-hop technique, but also in the history and music of the genre. Damie has been dancing and performing for over 20 years and teaching since the age of 13. She also has a strong athletic background in basketball and track and field. Her dance experience includes old/new school hip-hop, jazz, house, Caribbean, Polynesian, and West African technique. Damie has taught in various studios and recreation centers in the Bay Area, and is the founder and director of the Berkeley-based performance company "BodiRock". Currently she teaches youth and teens at Destiny Arts. Damie is passionate about dance, music and the history of both. An exuberant and dynamic teacher, she leads by example, giving 100% and exercising discipline and patience with herself and her students. Damie's aspirations include continuing the education of hip-hop culture and encouraging her students to embrace diversity when studying dance.



Alicia Otis-Levins will tell you that she has been dancing "for as long as I can remember". In 2003 she heard about the Destiny Arts Youth Performance Company and auditioned. She made it, and ever since has been an active member as a performer, stage writer/choreographer and stage manager. She has also been active in Diversity Works, conducting workshops and promoting a greater understanding of issues of power, liberation, oppression, and community building. In addition, Alicia is a peer mentor and tutor within the Oakland Unified school district, and currently works with Project Destiny Arts teaching violence prevention and dance within the Oakland school district.



Lee Sinclair is a writer and activist who lives with her husband and 3 children in San Francisco. Lee has been involved in AIDS related causes in Africa for 6 years. Inspired by her experiences with AIDS orphans in Kenya, and their stories of rape, incest, and sexual abuse, Lee realized that her own Self-Defense training could be life saving when applied to children and women living in the area. In February of 2007 she founded the first Anti-Rape Self-Defense program in the slums of Nairobi, which has one of the highest rates of rape in the world. To date, the 8 member I'M WORTH DEFENDING (IWD) team has taught over 18,000 women and children to defend themselves against assault. IWD also provides an array of innovative related programs designed to promote a culture of safety and healing in Kenya, including teen boys anti-rape life-skills classes, child-care cooperatives, counseling, referral services, and rape survivors anonymous meetings.



Martha Thompson is Director and Senior Instructor of IMPACT Chicago, and a member of the NWMAF Self Defense Instructor Certification Board. She has a third-degree black belt in Seido karate and trains at Thousand Waves Martial Arts and Self-Defense Center. She is also Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Women's Studies at Northeastern Illinois University. Her grant writing has focused on funding self-defense offerings at organizations addressing violence and inequalities based on gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. Among her articles on self-defense are "The Power of NO" and "Building Bridges Against Violence".



Sarah Trembath is a school teacher, lecturer, teacher mentor, and writer living in Washington, DC. She has been teaching self-defense since 1995 and Yang-style tai chi long form since 2006. She has contracted with or been hired by many outstanding organizations dedicated to creating peaceful communities in DC, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. In 2006, Sarah created Body Temple Self-Defense, Wellness, and Tai Chi (for adults) and Five Smooth Stones Self-Defense (for youth). Her work blends conflict resolution; consent, clear-communication, and boundary-setting techniques; emotion regulation; and defensive physical fighting techniques. She recently incorporated her practice and is in the process of submitting it to NWMAF for self-defense trainer certification. Sarah's passion is working with young people in high-crime areas in their efforts to live creative, nonviolent, long, and healthy lives. Her proudest career

achievements are the 3 national teaching awards that she was given, on recommendation of her high school students, in 2005, 2006, and 2007.



Yuko Uchikawa has been training in the martial arts and self-defense since 1992. She has been working in the field of anti-violence education by teaching self-defense for women, and is the co-founder of Ruckus Safety Awareness, a self-defense instructors' organization in New York City. Yuko has taught self-defense workshops in New York as well as in Japan, where she founded a Ruckus Safety Awareness branch, Jikaku Anzenjyutsu Ruckus, in 1997. She travels to Japan twice a year to conduct workshops, instructor training classes, and lectures. Since receiving a Master of Arts degree from Teachers College, Columbia University (2007), where she focused on Conflict Resolution and Mediation, she has been developing a conflict transformation curriculum to be taught

in Japan. Yuko is also a graphic designer and designs photography books.

Erin Weed's sorority sister was murdered at Eastern Illinois University in 2001. This tragedy inspired her to abandon her career in television production and immerse herself in studying all aspects of women's safety and self-defense. After studying with some of the best violence prevention experts in the world, she started a company called Girls Fight Back, which aims to teach self-protection strategies to young women in high school and college. Since starting GFB, she has spoken to over 300,000 women and written a book called Girls Fight Back! The College Girl's Guide to Protecting Herself. (Boulder Press, 2006) She has been featured in media including: Ladies Home Journal, The New York Times, Glamour, The Washington Post and Marie Claire. She was also named CosmoGirl of the Year 2002 by CosmoGirl magazine, and was given the Hometown Hero award by John Walsh, the founder of America's Most Wanted.



Lauren Wheeler is a 3rd degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do. She began training in Shotokan Karate in 1984 after a fellow student dared her to go to a "karate class". She is the founder and director of The Peaceful Warriors, an anti-violence martial arts youth group. She believes working with teens is a life-affirming experience where the teacher receives more than she gives. She is grateful to her teacher, Sensei Carol Middleton of DC Self Defense Karate Association. Lauren also holds Shodan ranking in Kobayashi Shorin Ryu from Nakozato Sensei in Okinawa. She has taught martial arts at the National Women Martial Arts Federation and Suigetsu camps as well as in Indonesia, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.

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