

Taijiquan Enthusiasts Organization & Tai Chi Club of Kutztown University Health & Martial Arts Festival Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. When and where is the Festival?

A. The Festival is usually held in May or June every other year. In 2011 it will be held at Kutztown University in Keystone Hall (as it had been in 2009). Kutztown University is on Route 222 between Reading and Allentown, about 80 miles west of New York City and 50 miles north of Philadelphia.

Q. What is the Health and Martial Arts Festival? What can I expect?

A. The original inspiration for the Festival came from the Tai Chi Farm, hosted by Jou Tsung Hwa throughout the seventies, eighties, and nineties until his untimely death in 1998. Generally there are scores of workshops on all different topics related in some way to health or martial arts, often focused specifically on Taijiquan (T'ai Chi Ch'uan), a Chinese Martial Art known for its health benefits. Although in the past we were only able to have one day Festivals in downtown Philadelphia, 2009 marked the first time for the expanded three-day format in Kutztown, PA. It was spectacularly successful, and the evaluations came back with glowing praise for the entire event.

It is, however, a lot of work and a labor of love for the organizers since the entire enterprise is non-profit and everyone is a volunteer. In order to maintain everyone's sanity, we've decided to hold the Festival every two years instead of every year.

The Sponsor's Expo will be open and available to the public, and normally features health and wellness providers from all over the United States. Sponsors underwrite the cost of the Festival so that the registration fee can be a nominal amount.

Throughout the day there are usually four seminars scheduled for the same time frame, one in each "track" We have a **forms and health** track, a **weapons** track, an **academic research** track, and a **push hands** track. Workshops run from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM every day of the Festival. In the evening on Friday is the Push Hands meet. There will be a special location for beginners so that they can learn push hands in a less-intense environment than the "advanced" players. In the evening on Saturday is the Banquet and Awards ceremony, followed by the *Sharing Our Arts* demonstrations.

On Sunday the final dinner is provided, and an accounting of all the income and expenses of the Festival will be announced to everyone involved. The goal of the Festival is to keep costs as low as possible without losing money - keeping just enough "extra" to seed the following year's Festival and donate a percentage of the proceeds to the David Chen Memorial Fund and Pacem In Vita program. David Chen was one of the founders of the organization and an inspiration to hundreds of followers. The Pacem In Vita program is a conflict resolution and leadership program for junior and senior high school students based upon Taijiquan.

Q. How much does it cost?

A. The Sponsor's Expo and the *Sharing Our Arts* demonstrations are free and open to the public. The workshops cost \$90 for all sessions, all three days. (The workshops only cost \$30 if you are already a member of the organization, and membership is included in the \$90 price.) The Banquet costs \$20.

Additionally, people can get housing and meals at Kutztown University for a very good price: Everyone associated with the Festival is offered accommodations in University Place, one of the newer residence halls at Kutztown University. Meals are served in the University dining hall. Housing includes a private bedroom with 2 beds in an air conditioned 4-bedroom suite with two bathrooms and a shared living room. If you prefer more luxurious surroundings, we reserve a certain number of rooms in the Bed and Breakfast two blocks away. There are also several hotels in the area.

Q. Is there any kind of volume discount? What if we have a whole bunch of people coming together?

A. Organizations can benefit by gathering their registrations together to obtain a 10% discount on all registrations. Alternatively, an organization can give out a "code" to all their people to use when they register individually. If there are enough registrants with the same code, the organization who applied for the code might have enough students attending to warrant a fee-waived sponsorship. Here are the levels:

5 students - Level 1 sponsorship

10 students - Level 2 sponsorship

15 students - Level 3 or 4 sponsorship

25 students - Level 5 sponsorship

Students must include their organization name or a promotion code on the registration form. (To get a promotion code, simply email Festival@TaijiquanEnthusiasts.org and we will assign one.) When the appropriate numbers of students have registered, the organization will be notified of the sponsorship level and asked if they wish to place an advertisement in the program, and if they wish to have a table at which they can sell their DVDs or other items. Sponsors also get a free meal ticket and a workshop pass for each level of sponsorship that they can give out.

Q. What if I want to volunteer to help with the Festival? What if I'm putting on a workshop for you?

A. We love volunteers. We are a 501c3 non-profit organization, and everyone associated with the Festival is a volunteer.

The \$30 workshop fee is waived for all volunteers and workshop leaders. However, we strongly encourage volunteers to become members (although we don't absolutely require it) prior to the Festival. The thinking is that we want everyone to feel joint ownership within the community, and the most direct route to ownership is to join the organization. (We do understand if you can't afford it, but if you can, we ask that you join.) Volunteers are asked to pay for their own room and board.

Volunteers must "register" at least three months prior to the Festival date to let us know when they will be at the Festival, what housing and meals they need, what their t-shirt size is.

There is a volunteer form they can fill out and send to Festival@TaijiquanEnthusiasts.org.

Q. What if I just want to come for a single day. Do you have a daily rate?

A. You can come for a single day for \$25, and you do not need to become a member. (And yes, you can pay \$75 for the three days and avoid the membership fee, but then you miss out on the benefits of membership).

Q. I want to come, but I don't really care about the workshops, and I don't need to stay overnight.

If you are not interested in the workshops, you can just reserve a seat at the Banquet. Spend the day in the Sponsor's Expo (which is free and open to the public), go to the Banquet, and watch the **Sharing Our Arts** demonstrations in the evening (also free and open to the public). You get to spend the whole day for just \$20.

Q. What is the dress for the Banquet? Is it formal attire?

A. Kind of. We would like people to dress in "Chinese Martial Art Formal", which generally means any Chinese-style attire. If you belong to a school, it is quite appropriate to wear the school t-shirt with kung fu pants. Kung Fu or Martial Arts uniforms (also known as "silks") are fine, as is any raw silk pant suit or simply a shirt with a Chinese-style collar. Again, while not absolutely required, it is encouraged in order to honor the heritage of Taijiquan.

Q. What if I just want one or two meals?

A. Anyone can pay cash or use a credit card to buy a meal in the South Dining Hall or any one of the other places to eat on campus. It only makes sense to buy meals if you plan to eat most of them with the group. The meal ticket also includes the banquet, so you don't have to pay that separately.

Q. Do I have to choose which workshops I'm going to attend?

A. Well, at some point you have to make a choice - but you can leave it until the last minute. You don't have to register for the specific workshops. The registration fee gets you into all of them, and your biggest problem will be choosing between the three or four excellent workshops offered in each time slot. You will be asked to fill out a very short evaluation for each workshop you attend. We use the evaluations to determine the schedule for the following year as highly rated workshops will get increased time and or number of slots.

Q. Do I have to be an experienced Tai Chi practitioner to attend the workshops?

A. No, absolutely not. Push-hands events are separated into beginners and advanced and the workshop instructors are expecting people at every level of expertise. That being said, a certain amount of common sense is required of attendees, and you will be asked to sign a waiver to that effect.

Q. Can I take photos/videos of the events?

A. Photos or videos are welcome in the public areas, at the banquet, and at the "Sharing our Arts" demonstrations. Cameras, videos and other recording equipment will be allowed in workshops only with the explicit permission of the instructor, obtained in advance.

Q. How do we know that the Sponsors aren't a bunch of quacks (i.e. selling products or services that don't work)?

A. Just because someone is a sponsor does not mean that the Taijiquan Enthusiasts Organization, nor the Tai Chi Club of Kutztown, endorses the products and services of the sponsor. However, we are diligent in making sure that anyone associated with the festival does not make unsubstantiated claims or unrealistic promises regarding their products and services. Any sponsor found making untrue claims will be asked to leave.

Q. Who are you anyway?

A. The Taijiquan Enthusiasts Organization is a non-profit all-volunteer membership organization of people dedicated to spreading the benefits of Taijiquan to everyone. The Tai Chi Club of Kutztown is a student organization of Kutztown University students who get together to learn Taijiquan every week during the fall and spring semesters of the school year. The two organizations co-host the Festival.

Q. This Festival is a great idea. I'd like to help. What can I do?

A. The most important thing for people to do is to spread the word. Send the flyer out to your friends. If you know of any holistic or traditional medical organizations, let them know about it - perhaps even suggest that they become sponsors. Post a notice of the event on your local newspaper or community website.

If you'd like to do even more, you can become a volunteer. There are dozens of jobs that need to be done.