

# FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT



AMY FROST

## To hell with circumstances, this alliance creates opportunities

By Dwayne Davis

**W**hen you think about martial arts in 2009, major MMA promotions like the UFC, Dream and Strikeforce come to mind, right? Our insatiable appetite for controlled violence continues to increase.

Movie stars such as Bruce Lee, Jean Claude Van Damme and Chuck Norris turned high-level martial arts training into a profitable movie and television niche. We've been watching our heroes defeat villains for years. And we love it.

However, we should be reminded that martial arts teaches respect, discipline and life skills—not just punching someone out.

The Martial Arts Benevolence Alliance is here to remind us of the positives. The MBA is a newly formed organization in Tulsa that hopes to bring together different martial arts for a common good.

"The MBA has been designed as a gateway for local martial artists to be able to create an element of friendship between the schools and for them to become a servant to the community," said co-founder and second-degree black belt in Ed Parker Kenpo, Robert Luellen.

Luellen went out of his way to avoid being in the story. The goal is not to promote his talents or his school. The objective is bringing martial artists together for the greater good of the community.

On September 26, the MBA will hold a tournament at the Claremore Expo Center. Students of all disciplines are encouraged to join and showcase their style. Karate, kickboxing, Taekwondo and grappling aficionados are welcome to compete.

Fans are encouraged to enjoy the festivities for free. The tournament will be broken down into three areas of competition: sparring, forms and self-defense. At the end of the day, the competitor with the highest aggregate score in each event will be named the Grand Champion.

Following the first ever MBA tournament, the martial artists will turn their attention to the Tulsa community.

On October 10, they will walk around LaFortune Park for the Special Olympics. The martial artists will convene on the grass to display their discipline, which will be a free seminar for the gallery once the walk concludes.

"All the martial artists in Oklahoma are being invited. Come down, support us, walk around LaFortune Park," Luellen said. "It really gives a great opportunity for the martial artists that have not had the opportunity to meet one another. Shake hands and join in a spirit of unity by joining these causes. Be a servant to the community like we know we want to be."

This is a grassroots, Tulsa-based initiative. The MBA is taking its message to Louisville, KY in December next. They plan to gather once a year. In time, perhaps you will see martial artists showing up in full Gi apparel for a multitude of events to raise awareness.

Someday, they hope to take the message nationwide.

"We want to make sure the momentum goes forward. An idea of fellowship, brotherhood and service to your community sounds good to me," he said.

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