ZenQuest Martial Arts Center
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An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Maia Jiu-jitsu Network Affiliate

NEWSLETTER
August 2026

Back-to-School Planning

Its time to plan for 'Back-To-School' again, and that means organizing our children's classes for the busy season at ZenQuest. We do this in order to keep reasonable limits on these classes, and ensure a positive experience for every student. Along with shopping and figuring out schedules, it's also important for parents and older kids to plan for their martial arts training at this time.

Students and parents should notify us at their earliest convenience which classes they will be continuing with this fall. Student lists are being created now for each youth class in the schedule, with limited space available. So, it is essential that we get kids onto the appropriate class lists.

Once again classes can conveniently be reserved online through our website! You can easily do this by visiting our website (zenquestmac.com) and following the link provided on the first page under **BTS/FALL REGISTRATION 2026.** From there, simply complete the 'Class Selection' form using the choices provided and send. As an alternative you can reserve your classes by any of the following ways:

- Send an email directly or through our website
- Speak to someone at the front desk
- Call us at 413-637-0656

Please note that class reservations and lists are made on a 'first come first served' basis. Waiting lists will be generated for classes that reach their limit. We will notify you if a class has become filled. Students who are not able to attend their first choice for classes right away are encouraged to choose alternative classes until space opens up in their most preferred classes.

Also, remember that class reservations are effective with an active student enrollment. **Reservations for students not currently enrolled must be accompanied with tuition payment to restart the student's membership.** Remember, too, that 'Partial Participation' is reserved for students aged seven years old and younger. Students turning thirteen years of age (or older) should begin transitioning to our Adult classes, which do not need to be organized like the youth classes.

As of September 1st, youth students are encouraged to plan on a maximum of two to three classes per week in each program they do. This is to balance enthusiastic attendance with allowing other students to share in the fun. Also, parents and students need to be careful to prevent 'burnout' in younger students. This still allows most students to attend as many as four to six classes each week between Karate and Jiu-jitsu.

There are no changes to our schedule of youth classes, and tuition rates will remain unchanged at this time. As always, please let us know if you have any questions or concerns going forward. We will look forward to another great season of fun and learning at the oldest and best martial arts school in the Berkshires!!

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Hit Play!

The new playground is OPEN! After hours of work preparing the site and building the structure, it was finally good to go on July 12. The new set is bigger than the old one, featuring two observation towers, swings, a slide, a tire-swing, a ramp, a climbing wall, and a climbing net. In a fun twist, the tube-slide from the old playground will be repurposed to be included in the new set-up soon.

The new playground replaces the one that had been there since the spring of 2011. That one had served hundreds of children over many years, but had reached the end of it's useful life. In recent years parts of that one were replaced, but the set reached a point where it just made more sense to replace it.

A team of volunteers contributed to the construction of the new playground. Special thanks to Andre, Matt, Glenn, Tilo, Jack, and Beth for helping us build this. Also, thanks to our kids and families for being patient during the construction.

As always our first priority is safety for our students and families so students and families, please use the equipment properly and exercise the utmost care in doing so…and have fun!

5-Minutes

ZenQuest has a standing '5-minute Rule' meaning that students should make a habit of arriving 5 minutes before their classes. This allows time for students to prepare for their classes properly i.e. removing shoes, changing clothes, attending the bathroom, etc. This also allows the student to prepare mentally for their class.

When students arrive to class late they usually have to hurry to get into the class, causing them to struggle to focus. They will also miss explanations about the plan for the class, and miss warm up exercises which can minimize the risks for injuries.

So, please follow the 5-minute Rule and set yourself (or your child) up for success in every class.

Before the Fall

ZenQuest is providing a 'Fall Prevention' program for the elderly in Williamstown. The six week program was developed for the Williamstown Council On Aging and the Berkshire Public Health Alliance. Falls are the leading cause of injuries among adults aged 65 and older. Each year millions of older adults require emergency room treatment for fall-related injuries, like hip fractures, concussions, and even traumatic brain injuries. These can lead to a loss of mobility and function, and lead to other health complications.

The new program was inspired by Sophie Carnes Jannen, a Public Health Nurse Educator for the BPHA. Her original motivation was to educate the elderly on safe falling strategies from the martial arts. Once Senseis Connie and Mark dove into the topic, they found that there are other aspects of preventing falls that should also be addressed.

The program will wrap up this month. For more information on hosting ZenQuest's Fall Prevention program in your community please contact us at train@zenquestmac.com or 413-637-0656.

IMPORTANT DATES

Karate Sparring Week - August 17-22
NO CLASSES - Saturday/Monday, September 5/7
NO CLASSES - Lee Founders Day - Saturday, September 20
NO CLASSES - Mon, Oct 12, Indigenous People's Day

NEW STUDENTS!

Welcome: Jameson O'Brien, Emmett Gonkska, Haylee Gonska, Brody Garcia, Joshua Kees, and Amit Shah

Welcome Back: Dan Letourneau

RECENT PROMOTIONS

TIGERS:
7kyu - Stella Gabriel

DRAGONS:

COBRAS:

UECHI-RYU:
9kyu - Branden Boule
7kyu - Chalice Mitchell

PYTHONS:

JIU-JITSU:

MUAY THAI:
White - Alex Sam

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Glenn Giumarra
Sara Bullock
Michael Reis
Neil Von Flatern
Tracy Stoddard
Ian McFarlane
Elias Casey
Logan Finn
Henry Cadorette
Brianna Arseneau
Brayden Gerlitz
Ryan Johansen
Ashton Brennan
Cyrus Rivera
Sebastian Chavez-Norbury
Beckett Lyon
Clara Jeanette Miller
Landon Prior
Stella Tcherevkoff
Dorothy Method
Andrew Cass
Felix Reed
Ester Torres
Aadyha Vasireddy
Haylee Gonska

Terminology

Falling

Japanese: Tsuiraku
Brazilian: Caindo
Thai: Lum Long

Voted
"Best Martial Arts Studio"
EIGHT years in a row!
In the Berkshire Eagle's 'Best of the Berkshires'
ZenQuest Martial Arts

'Summer Fun' Continues

This August will see the continuation of our 'Summer Fun for Kids' in all of our children's classes! Each week will feature a different theme designed to keep kids excited about coming to class while providing a fun break from their usual routine. The themes in August will include:

August 3–8: Challenge Circle
Students will rotate through a variety of fun, age-appropriate challenges designed to test their skills and determination.

August 10–15: Superheroes
Students are welcome to wear a superhero T-shirt, costume, or face paint featuring their favorite superhero or character. Throughout class, we'll explore heroic qualities such as courage, perseverance, standing up for what's right, and helping others.

August 17–22: No-Gi Mode
Students may attend class wearing a T-shirt with shorts or athletic pants instead of their uniform. The final 15 minutes of class will be dedicated to sparring.

August 24–29: Nerf Ball Battle
Students will head outdoors for games, playground time, and an exciting (and refreshing!) Nerf Ball water battle.

We'll be sending weekly updates to help students and families prepare for each theme. We're excited to share ZenQuest's first-ever Summer Fun series with you. Join us for an August full of learning, laughter, and fun!

Lee Founders Day

The town of Lee has invited ZenQuest to set up a booth at the 2026 'Lee Founders' weekend. This is an annual event celebrating the town's rich history, traditions, and hometown pride organized by the Lee Chamber of Commerce. The weekend honors Lee's founding and brings together residents and visitors for food, music, games, crafts, and family-friendly activities.

ZenQuest will be at the event all of Saturday, September 20th providing information to the community and performing a demonstration. The demo will include students of all ages performing different skills from Karate, Jiu-jitsu, and Muay Thai.

This is an amazing opportunity for parents to see their kids perform some of the skills that they've been working on! Students and instructors interested in providing support or participating in the demonstration should notify Sensei Connie or Mark.

This event will take the place of regularly scheduled classes for that day.