

## WORLD T'AI CHI & QIGONG DAY – PATCHOGUE: THE BEGINNING

WTS Staff

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McElroy Laoshi actually helped to organize two events this year. Not only did he found and coordinate the Village of Patchogue's first participation in the annual event, he was also involved in the initial stages of planning the Des Moines, Iowa, event, which held on the Ankeny campus of Des Moines Area Community College. The Iowa event continued to build on the momentum created by Laoshi's work bringing World T'ai Chi Day to Des Moines in 2000 and maintaining annual T'ai Chi in the Park sessions in the city's Drake Park every year since 1997.



The influence of Water Tiger School is felt in two states this year: Dr. Robert Swarts leading at World T'ai Chi Day on April 7<sup>th</sup> at DMACC in Central Iowa.

Patchogue's first participation in World T'ai Chi & Qigong Day on April 7<sup>th</sup> met with considerable success, following considerable challenges. Although releases were generated and sent in a timely fashion, pre-event press coverage was nonexistent. The village's Parks and Recreation department did purchase an advertisement in The Long Island Advance. The little "karate guy" graphic used by the paper's artistic staff shared copy space with the village's annual Easter Bunny Run. We were quite surprised to have nearly 30 people attend the event in the gymnasium at South Ocean Middle School in the village. Early April weather kept us from meeting at Shorefront Park overlooking Patchogue Bay.

Following the guidelines set by event founder, Bill Douglas, we scheduled a pre-event workshop on Thursday evening, April 5<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 – 8:00 PM at Four Sisters Community Center. Laoshi led the three attendees through Water Tiger School's signature T'ai Chi Qigong Breathing Set in preparation for the Saturday morning gathering.

The unfolding of the event was filled with many demonstrations from Laoshi and a small number of other Long Island T'ai Chi players. Additionally, the instructors and students of Water Tiger's landlord, Aikido at Suffolk Aikikai, gave an Aikido demonstration clearly showing the school's nine-year history and ties to the Aikikai Hombu Dojo. Taking a break from the demonstrations and joining others in our Eastern Time Zone at 10:00 AM, Laoshi led participants through the Breathing Set.

With successful unfolding of World T'ai Chi Day in two states, 2001 proved a banner year for the goal of Water Tiger School to build cohesion within local T'ai Chi communities and to educate the public and the media regarding the benefits the arts have to offer. We seek to build on the cohesion cultivated within the community to reach the level of education desired.

