

# New York Traditional Karate League

## A Vision For The 21<sup>st</sup> Century

From where did we come, where are we going, and what is it we hope to accomplish? These may be the three most important questions requiring periodic assessment, for these are the questions that speak to who we are, both individually and collectively.

Perhaps history may reveal the lessons of 2008: starting with a skyrocketing stock market and a housing boom through the roof, collapsing in what may turn out to be the greatest global economic crisis in modern times; from electing the first African American President, to making sense of war, globalization and the cost of preserving the very planet we live on. And in the midst of all we hold so precious and dear, how often we overlook the little footnotes that deserve greater acknowledgement and appreciation.

One such footnote was the birth of the NYTKL (New York Traditional Karate League). Though it may be presumptuous to compare the beginning of a martial arts league to the major events filling our airwaves every day, a deeper look may reveal something different. Unlike the greed and fast money intoxicating those we call the “best and the brightest,” a small group of concerned and responsible adults conceived, planned and brought to fruition the NYTKL. Based upon a simple mission, the NYTKL dedicated itself to building character, ethics and morality for the future of New York, namely, its youth. Through the sport of karate, the NYTKL offered an alternative to what we are seeing in the world today. Forget the shortcuts, the getting over and the con games. The NYTKL offered hard work, dedication and discipline as its foundation. Although not every participant will be a champion, every participant is a winner. And isn't that the message we want to impart? The knowledge, understanding and responsibility gained through years of study, character building and strong spirit will translate into the self-esteem and self respect necessary to mold the kind of individuals we will need to bring about a future everyone can share and be proud of.

This vision was honed in 2008 through a series of NYTKL competitions, culminating in October at Queens College, in Queens, New York. Like clockwork, with the precision of a well-oiled machine, six rings of continuous competitions, including Kata, Kumite and Kobudo flowed from 9am to 5pm to the delight of over 1500 parents, teachers, sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, of all nationalities, colors and religions. In the spirit of fairness and good sportsmanship, 2008 was not over yet.

In November a celebration of this eventful season was acknowledged at a luncheon given at Antun's Catering Hall in Queens. There, the founders, judges, volunteers and competitors, with their families, were recognized. Awards were proudly given and accepted, thanking and honoring all those who made this first season an outstanding success.

Two additional points require mention. Firstly, from a sports perspective, the purpose of the NYTKL is not just to have closed competitions. Rather, NYTKL's mission is to support both competitively and financially the development of our top athletes. It is the goal of the NYTKL to support and sponsor athletes at the highest levels of competition, even to the national and international tournaments. Secondly, we realize that character development goes beyond oneself. As adults, we must lead our youth by example. It is in this spirit that Sensei Georges Aschkar Jr. was awarded a Declaration of

Honor by the Borough President of Queens, Helen M. Marshall, for initiating a one year long fundraising drive to benefit the sick children of St. Jude Hospital.

In the spirit of beginning, growing and improving, revisiting the three questions posed at the onset of this article becomes all the more critical. From where did we come, where are we going, and what is it we hope to accomplish? Each of us must answer these questions for ourselves, and decide what, if anything, we are willing to contribute. In 2008, The New York Traditional Karate League began and completed its first full year. It is our firm commitment to become a force for positive change, trusting our efforts will bear the fruits of our labor for many years to come.

Please visit [NYTKL.ORG](http://NYTKL.ORG) for more information and how to become part of our growing family. Email: [JOINUS@NYTKL.ORG](mailto:JOINUS@NYTKL.ORG).