



The Wu Wei Tai Chi Club in partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Parks has launched a fundraising campaign to construct a Tai Chi practice court and contemplation center in Cabin John Regional Park in Potomac, MD. The project will honor an outstanding member of the community while fulfilling a clear need for exercise space within the park. The court will be a unique outdoor resource for Montgomery County, adding functionality to the park while preserving its natural charm. The court will provide a flat flagstone surface on a durable concrete slab, designed to be suitable for the practice of tai chi, yoga, meditation, martial arts and dance — all healthy activities that need a firm footing. The court's design will be a forty-five foot circle in contrasting colors, depicting the tai chi symbol which since ancient times has represented the balance of the yin and yang principles found in nature. Similar courts can be found in Asia, but this court will be the first such facility in our area. With landscaping and benches, it will be a significant addition to the park that will invite visitors to stay and enjoy the beauty of the park.

An ancient art

Tai Chi is a form of low-impact exercise developed centuries ago in China, and practiced by millions worldwide. With slow, graceful movements, it is often described as 'moving meditation.'



Though developed in a different era, Tai Chi has a new relevance in today's busy world, as it has been shown to relieve stress and promote better flexibility, circulation and overall health for people of all ages, while regular Tai Chi practice lowers blood pressure and improves balance and strength, reducing risk of injury, especially for the elderly. Many local hospitals, businesses and recreation centers offer Tai Chi classes for just these reasons. Traditionally practiced outdoors, Tai Chi finds the perfect

home in Cabin John Regional Park, a distinctive natural retreat close to both the Capital Beltway and Interstate 270 which contains a large variety of athletic and recreational facilities.

A memorial to a community leader

Tai Chi practice is not new to Cabin John Regional Park. Every Saturday morning, rain or shine, a dedicated group gathers in the park to practice Tai Chi together. David C. Chen, a longtime resident of Rockville, MD, started this weekly get-together in 1997. David was well known and well loved in the Greater Washington community for his kindness, his generosity and his tireless promotion of Tai Chi. With four gold medals in national and international competition, David was a well-qualified teacher. Eager to help anyone who wanted to learn, he often traveled miles to teach a free class to beginners. David was a



respected writer on the subject and also an accomplished graphic artist. His reverence for Tai Chi found expression in the silent beauty of many of his paintings, two of which are shown here. When David died unexpectedly from complications following surgery late in 2005, his students and other friends proposed the construction of the Tai Chi Court at Cabin John as a fitting memorial to honor his life and vision. David's life was an inspiration and example to all. As one of David's students said, "We build memorials to people. But what we salute are really the ideas they championed, the things they did, the power of their vision."



Project progress

In 2006 a committee was formed to promote the court project. A survey of theirs showed solid community support for the idea. A local architect donated his services and the plans were submitted to the Montgomery County Department of Parks. Park planners were enthusiastic about the project, adding refinements to enhance the proposed design. After a public hearing — where the project was well received — it was approved unanimously by the county's Park and Planning Board. The Montgomery County Department of Parks, the proud steward of 410 parks on over 34,000 acres of parkland, will oversee the court's construction. The Tai Chi court project conforms to the department's mission of protecting and interpreting the county's valuable natural and cultural resources while offering a variety of enjoyable recreational activities that promote healthy lifestyles and provide clean, safe, and accessible places for leisure-time activities. The court — slated for completion by spring of 2010 — will be a prized addition to one of the busiest parks in our area, and will serve the community for many years to come.



For more information on this project, please go to <http://www.wuweitaichi.com/founder.htm>
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