

# CHAPTER ONE

## MATA After-School First Steps

This chapter provides a step-by-step overview for starting your after-school program. For detailed program specifics, refer to later chapters. Always keep your insurance provider informed of your activities.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You will not offer after-school care nor ever use the words supervision and care with your after-school program. You will need to make a conscious effort to differentiate and separate your after-school program from a childcare program at every opportunity.

### **Shop the Competition**

Create a map of your area with local schools in a ten-mile radius. This radius could vary a great deal depending on the population density of your area. Pick the five closest schools to target initially for promotions and transportation. You can add more schools and students as you grow. It is better to have more students at a few schools than to have a few students at a lot of schools to make transportation scheduling easier.

Next, you will do an internal survey by simply asking your existing evening students (if you already have a school) if they go to daycare, extended day at school or have a babysitter after-school. I started with nine students this way.

### **Transportation**

Regarding transportation, you have three options.

- a. Outsource it and negotiate to pay a transportation company weekly.
- b. Get local schools to name your school as an alternate drop off point

after-school.

- c. Do it yourself.

### **Outsource It**

You will next negotiate with a transportation company to pick up your students from the elementary and middle schools. You will establish a route with your transportation company, including the students' names, schools attended, times of dismissal and window of opportunity for pick up at each school.

### **Local School Bus System**

Call your school board and ask to speak with the transportation superintendent to find out if your school can be designated as a drop-off point after-school for the after-school program. This will give you free transportation.

### **Do It Yourself**

If you pick up yourself with your own vehicles, you will want to have commercial insurance. I also advise you to separate your transportation from your school by making it a separate LLC.

Your parents will have to contract separately with your transportation LLC when going this route. I will also state that if you must start this way, eventually outsource to a transportation company as I did for 16 years. This enabled me to grow to 177 students after-school in one location.

Since then, I formed my own separate LLC transportation company that uses outside professional drivers. This still allows me to operate a very large MATA After-School Program.

### **Staff**

You can use junior instructors as young as 14 years of age if there are adults present. Be certain to check your local, federal and state Department of Labor laws regarding child labor and documentation.

# MODULE TWO

## The Value of After-School Students

### 1. Necessity vs. Luxury

After-school programs are a necessity for many parents, unlike martial arts classes, which are considered a luxury. This difference means after-school students are worth 3–6 times more than standard martial arts students.

### 2. Return on Investment (ROI)

The ROI for after-school students is high. Many new students come through referrals from local elementary schools, often at little or no cost to you. For instance, in Central Florida, after-school students are worth three times more than evening students, so 175 after-school students equate to 525 evening students.

### 3. Financial Breakdown

- **Registration Fee:** \$50 (includes uniform, T-shirt, and curriculum book). This can be \$40 to \$100 based on your area. It also serves as a tool for negotiating semester or camp payments.
- **Family Discounts:** Offer discounts for multiple children (e.g., 10% off for the second child, 20% off for the third, etc.). The registration fee is one-time, even if a child leaves and returns.
- **Weekly Rate:** \$79 per week. This is adjusted based on local daycare rates, with an annual increase of \$2 to \$4.
- **Camp Rate:** \$139 per week for spring break, fall break, and summer camp, including field trips. This rate is about twice the after-school rate.

### 4. Additional Revenue Sources

- **Test Fees:** \$210 per year for test fees for students attending five days a week.
- **Ninja Nites:** \$25 each, averaging \$150 per student per year (assuming attendance at six out of nine events).
- **Snacks:** \$1 per snack, with the average student spending \$2 per day. Total annual revenue from snacks is \$260.
- **Pads and Gear:** \$105 for required pads, mouth guards, and cups.

## **5. Total Revenue Per Student**

- **Registration Fee:** \$50
- **After-School Tuition:** \$3,002 (for 38 weeks)
- **Camp Tuition:** \$1,807 (for 13 weeks)
- **Test Fees:** \$210
- **Ninja Nites:** \$150
- **Snacks:** \$260
- **Pads:** \$105

**Total Revenue Per Student:** \$5,539

## **6. Comparison with Traditional Students**

An after-school student generates about 3 times the net revenue of a traditional evening student. Traditional students, paying \$129 per month, are worth \$1,548 annually. After-school students provide more value, and some U.S. areas see a 4 to 6 times return.

## **7. Benefits to Parents**

Parents gain more than just martial arts training. They get structure, discipline, respect, self-confidence, and fitness for their children. While we do not assist with homework, we offer a valuable program that goes beyond daycare or tutoring services.

This approach highlights the significant value of after-school programs compared to traditional martial arts classes and emphasizes the benefits for both the program owner and the parents.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Selecting a Location

### 1. Adding an After-School Program

If you already have a martial arts school, adding an after-school program can significantly boost your income. If your current school is small, you can still benefit from adding a program for around 25 after-school students, who pay three times more than regular students. For larger schools, expanding to multiple locations can further increase revenue.

### 2. Finding a New Location

#### Choosing the Right Space:

- **Location:** Look for warehouses with street frontage, preferably in high-traffic areas near main intersections. Avoid only considering strip malls or retail spaces.
- **Warehouse Advantage:** Search for warehouses being built or newly constructed. You can often customize these spaces to fit your needs, such as adding walls, bathrooms, and other necessary features.
- **Optimal Size:** Plan for 30-40 students per 1,000 square feet. In a space of 1,050 square feet, you can run 40-45 students in divided rooms simultaneously. My current space of 6,780 square feet accommodates up to 180 students.

### 3. Maximizing Space

#### Room Configuration:

- **Dividers:** Use PVC vertical blinds to separate different training levels or classes. This method allows you to effectively use your space and run multiple classes at once.
- **Class Organization:** Divide your space into different areas for beginners, lower belts, intermediates, and advanced students. This setup helps manage large groups and maintain instructional quality.

### 4. Facility Features

#### Layout Considerations:

- **Lobby and Viewing Area:** Include a lobby and a closed-in viewing area where parents can observe their children without disrupting classes. This area can also serve as a snack shop.
- **Amenities:** Incorporate large offices, changing rooms, and a pro shop into your facility for added convenience and services.

## 5. Location Strategy

### Key Points:

- **Visibility:** Aim for a location with drive-by traffic and near major intersections. Even if you're behind a retail strip mall or in an industrial park, visibility is crucial.
- **Competition:** Remember, your competition is primarily daycare centers, not other martial arts schools. Daycares often choose less visible locations near elementary schools.

## 6. Planning and Signage

### Steps to Take:

- **Map Analysis:** Obtain a map of your county's schools and overlay your location to identify nearby elementary schools.
- **Warehouse Space:** Consider wholesale warehouse space with frontage or a triple-net lease. If feasible, purchase a building and lease out extra space.
- **Signage:** Plan for prominent signage to attract drive-by traffic. Ensure your signage is large and visible.

### Chapter Review

- 1 **Map Schools:** Overlay your location on a county map to see the proximity to elementary schools.
- 2 **Explore Warehouses:** Look for warehouses with frontage and high visibility.
- 3 **Lease Options:** Consider triple-net leases or purchasing a building.
- 4 **Location Visibility:** Aim for locations with good drive-by traffic and near high-traffic areas.
- 5 **Customize Space:** Find warehouses that allow for custom build-outs to your specifications.
- 6 **Space Utilization:** Use PVC curtains to divide large spaces for multiple classes.
- 7 **Plan Signage:** Ensure you have effective signage to attract attention.

These strategies will help you successfully expand your martial arts school with a profitable after-school program.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## The Tools of the Trade

Obviously, you will need a place to teach, and some basic, but necessary, tools to make your program a success. A very simple, but often overlooked, item is a Guest Register at the front desk. Everyone who walks in your front door, who is not a member, must sign in at the front desk each time until they become a member on file.

It doesn't matter how many times you spoke with them on the phone or even if you think you have their phone number on your callback list. You will find that until people really know and trust you they may be hesitant to provide their home or work number. Your register has a place for name, address, home and work number and how they heard about you. You need to check it when they are signing in, and if they have not filled it out completely or are being evasive, find out more information when you are on tour or in your office.

Find out what kind of work they do and how close their job is to you and then you can call information and get their work number. Use caution, because some companies won't allow their employees to take personal phone calls. I work the phone relentlessly and if you aren't good at it, get good at it or get someone who is good at it.

We operate "**Open-Access, Free To Come and Go**" facilities for all classes. This includes all After School, Evening and Weekend Classes. There will be no signing out of students for the purpose of Billing, Testing Attendance and especially for Supervision. We take attendance at the front door as children leave our buses and enter our front door. This is the roster we will for billing and testing attendance. We corroborate this attendance



with our bus driver rosters at the end of each week to make sure we have an accurate count.

### **Tools You Will Need**

In order to do business properly, you will need at least two voice lines into your school and a credit card processor. Record a clear and exciting voice mail message.

I cross reference my caller ID each morning against the recorded messages and times and then call back anyone who called me on my caller ID who did not leave a message. You will find that there are a lot of people who do not like to talk to a recording! I always get new members from this method. Always have a human answer the phone when you are open, whether you are teaching class or not. You can and will lose sales otherwise.

You will need a TV and a DVD player to show movies during all day camps, summer camp, etc. You will also need a sound system that has the power and quality to fill your school and can double as a tool for Fitness Kickboxing Classes, if you have it. I hook my system up to my TV and when we watch movies, the sound is amplified through my entire training area.

### **Signage**

You will need roadside signs, also called snipe or real estate signs, to place on the right-of-way of school properties. You will see other similar signs for Soccer, basketball, Football, etc. Not all schools allow this but a donation to the PTA or Principals Fund may help your cause.

Beware placing signs on public right-of-ways. Doing so may land you in trouble with code enforcement and ultimately lead to large daily fines. You

will also need magnetic signs for the vehicles you use when transporting your students. You will also need brochure racks that can be purchased from an office supply store.

### **Parents' Responsibilities**

At enrollment, I educate the parents of their responsibilities and duties to help make our program run safely and smoothly. They are to notify the child's school office that our school will be picking up their child on the following Monday. If you use a professional transportation service, make sure they know who they are and be sure to have your magnetic signs on the bus doors.

Parents are responsible for notifying their school's office and their child's teacher that we will be picking up their child. They absolutely must call you and notify you if their child is going to be out for any reason, whether you transport yourself, outsource to a transportation company or if you have the actual county school buses dropping off to you. Then you can notify who you have to in order to not miss anyone.

We ask for work number, home number, cell phone and other emergency numbers of relatives in case we need to reach them. Often a parent neglects to notify us because they had a relative pick up their child or they picked up their child early for a dentist appointment or because they were sick. You need to make certain the parent(s) know how extremely important it is that they notify the transportation service and/or you. You will charge a penalty fee for parents who repeatedly abuse your policies of notification.

### **Teaching Tools**

You will need the usual mirrors, chairs, bags, blockers, body shields and other martial arts teaching tools as well. I also have a tripod easel in my

lobby for posters that advertise all upcoming events and also pass out flyers to all students.

You may not have any actual physical games such as Connect Four®, Uno®, Perfection®, little Match Box® cars, chess, checkers, etc. You will need these types of sit down board games for both after school and summer camp. These games will be mostly for your summer camp.

If children play any board games in your after-school program, it should be during the time after class while they are waiting to go home, on their own time. If children are going to do any homework at all, it will totally be on their own and done at this short time while awaiting to go home.

**Absolutely NO tutoring or help can be given at any time.**

I also have a portable basketball hoop and different playground balls on hand. Everyday we dress out, we warm up with games such as basketball, dodgeball and 4-square.

You will need an area where the kids can eat their snacks and won't ruin your floor, such as a tiled area. Or, you can consider putting down plastic drop cloths. The children will make a mess and you have to keep this area clean after snack time. You never know when you will have a walk-in who will want a tour of your school.

Another simple but necessary tool for large groups of children are whistles for you and each of your teachers. Save your voice!

Let your students know that when you blow the whistle, it is time to be quiet. You will find that many coaches on soccer fields, football fields, etc., have had surgery on their vocal chords as well, so please take my advice.

## **Chapter Review**

1. Have a guest register and make every guest sign in each time they visit.
2. Get a professional website created by MATA.
3. Use your caller ID to verify all callers and to perform call backs in case you failed to get another phone number on the info call.
4. Purchase a TV and DVD player to show movies for all day camps. A good sound system is also good for day camps, Parents Night Out and kickboxing classes.
5. Purchase roadside signs, also called “snipe signs.”
6. You will need brochures/flyers specific to the after school program and summer camp program.
7. Purchase plastic brochure racks to display your brochures for schools and businesses.
8. Use a tripod and easel to advertise in your lobby.
9. Purchase games for down-time after class, before they go home, and for day camps and summer camp.
10. Get some basketballs if you have room for indoor basketball and a small beach- ball for games of dodgeball.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## How to Establish a Rate

This is most important step and it's not that hard to do. If you start too low and enroll a lot of students, then you will have to increase your rates to be in line with your market, and you may lose students playing catch-up. If you start too high, you may have difficulty enrolling enough students. The key is to accurately conduct a local market analysis.

You simply need to call three to five daycares in your area and find out what they charge for one week of after school care, from approximately 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., with transportation provided. Though you are **NOT** in the supervision and care business, but you are competing as an alternative to this, with martial arts and transportation provided.

Once you have your figures from these centers, on a scale of one to ten, you want to be an eight or a nine. Since you offer so much more than daycare, you will be the obvious choice! When you factor in your test fees, pads for sparring, sports bags to carry their equipment, Ninja Nights, in-school tournaments, birthday parties (if you offer them), seminars, etc., you will be a 12 on that same scale.

I provide each parent a form listing all testing fees and the costs of the necessary safety gear to be purchased once their child reaches a certain level (in my school, it is at yellow belt, or approximately three months at five days per week).

All new members receive, in their new member packet at enrollment, a sheet that explains, "What New Members Can Expect." I have no problem charging test fees or any other fee-for-service rendered, so long as it has

been explained verbally and in writing at enrollment.

I do raise my rates a few dollars each year by doing a new market analysis. I am usually the least expensive on face value. However, with the other fees, which I explain to the parent in person after I explain features and benefits, we will probably be the most expensive and offer the most.

Daycares average \$75-79 per week and I currently charge \$79. I raised my rate last January to \$79, after I notified all the parents in my school by newsletter or special flyer. I will, of course, include the current rates of all the competing daycares in my area and reiterate what their child will not learn there and how much we offer at our school.

I send this flyer home December 1st to give parents time to change, if they wish, and because I may be closed for one week at Christmas.

Once you have established a rate, you will know how much money you can afford to pay your transportation service. Currently, I own my own transportation service. I made it a separate LLC from my martial arts school and I have my parents contract separately with it.

When you collect on a week-to-week basis at the school, make sure you get the client's credit card at point of enrollment to guarantee payment. We charge their credit cards during the quiet time on Friday mornings for the upcoming week. Parents who either do not have a credit card or won't give us their card are required to pay on Thursdays. If they do not pay on Thursday, then they must pay on Friday, including an additional \$5 late fee.

Originally, the MATA After-School program fee was always collected on a week-to-week basis at the martial arts school. I still do it this way and firmly believe it is the best way to do so. Our market of child care centers and

extended day at schools are all collected on a week-to- week basis.

If the parent has not paid by either of these methods at our required times, we do not pick up their child on Monday after school. Of course, we call the parent and let them know this and ask them to please hurry and pay either Friday night or slip a check under the door over the weekend. You might be surprised how fast people rustle up the funds when they find out that the service is not going to pick up their child on Monday!

Originally, the transported after school program fee was always collected on a week-to-week basis right at the martial arts school. It is still done this way very successfully in many schools. However, you can sign students to a one-year contract, or a school semester contract or a summer camp contract and outsource the collections to a billing company of your choice.

# **CHAPTER SIX**

## **Setting Up Transportation**

Transportation is the backbone of the MATA After-School program. There are several ways to accomplish this and I will go over all these methods in this chapter, including the pros and cons. Regardless of your choice, contact your insurance provider to make sure you have coverage.

I outsourced my transportation to professional transportation companies for 16 years and then bought my own transportation company. I bought three large school buses and three almost new fifteen-passenger vans. I also have one-half sized school bus that I keep around for emergencies. We currently pick up at 20 schools, with my maximum after school enrollment at 175 students.

### **School Bus System**

The absolute best way to transport your students is to have the schools do it for you for free. You need to determine at which schools you wish to pick up and then call your school board and ask for the transportation department. In some instances, you can have the head of the transportation department determine your school to be an "alternate school drop off point" for your students.

This may be for the whole county, several schools in your area or maybe just one school that has a route near your school. You, of course, will take any free service you can get.

If you can get free transportation in this manner, you can start your program at any time of the year and with only a handful of students.



## **Transport Them Yourself**

The next method of transporting students is to transport them yourself. There are actually several ways to do so. If you already have a fifteen-passenger van or two, you can also start almost immediately. I started this way in 1991 with just 9 students that I signed up from an “internal promotion” by simply asking my evening students if they went to daycare, extended day at school or to a babysitter.

Initially, I used my own car and my partner’s beat up van. This didn’t last long. The van had poor brakes, I signed up more students than I could get to, I didn’t really have enough insurance to cover everyone, and I discovered that transporting children myself was a distraction from more important business activities.

If you are going to do it yourself, get commercial carrier insurance beyond your personal insurance to be safe for all. Separate your vehicles into a separate LLC and have your parents contract with them separately.

If you separate your transportation, as I did, don’t use it outside of picking up for you to your own school. It will operate at a deficit. This means you will fund it yourself. I take extra money to myself from my S corporation school and fund my transportation LLC myself, so as not to commingle the corporate funds.

If you get a decent new or used fifteen-passenger van(s) or used school buses, if you have enough students. Your student count will be limited by the number of vehicles and seats that you have. The average number of schools serviced by one vehicle is three. I have been doing this now for 26 years and I can get to three, and sometimes even four schools with one of my buses. This depends on where the schools are located in reference to your school, how many students you are picking up and what time the

schools let out.

Each school will have a “window of opportunity” to pick up after school from 10 to 30 minutes. Often, schools in your area may have different dismissal times, too.

Although most school owners pick up students themselves with their own vehicles, they have not crossed all their T’s and dotted all their I’s.

Transporting students yourself can be the most inexpensive way to transport students, next to the school board doing so for free. You will either have to be a driver, designate your employees to do so, or hire someone to drive your vehicles for you. **Make sure that you have the proper carrier insurance coverage to transport children.**

Check and see if you need a Department of Transportation (DOT) license to go onto school property to pick up children. If you are driving a bus, you will also need a commercial driver’s license (CDL) possibly with air brake certification and passenger endorsement.

You will have to ask your insurance company what you need for their coverage of your vehicles. If you hire people to drive your vehicles, you will need to perform a background check. The DOT license does this as well.

If you decide to pick up students yourself, it’s smart to establish a second company to protect your school and you personally.

I set up a separate limited liability company (LLC) called MATA After-School, LLC. I took money from my main school account and opened a second bank account under this name. I do not drive any of these vehicles, nor do I have my instructors driving, as I want them in the school with the children as they are dropped off. They are teachers and not drivers.

I hired professional, retired bus drivers with CDL and DOT licenses to drive for me. I bought the vehicles, the insurance, pay for the fuel and all of the maintenance, and pay the drivers all from the MATA After-School, LLC account.

By doing things this way, I am legally protected should a lawsuit ever be filed. I do not commingle the corporate funds, so if a suit is ever launched, they won't be able to "pierce the corporate veil" and reach me. This is the most professional way to handle transportation.

If you are going to pick up yourself or use your teachers, you can still set up a separate corporation like I did. Just make sure that you pay your teachers from your new LLC and not your school funds. For instance, if you have a chief instructor that you pay \$1,000 per week salary for teaching and he drives for you five days per week, you can pay him \$800 per week from your school payroll and pay him \$200 per week from your new LLC. This will protect you.

In addition, you will need a good mobile mechanic who can come to you on a moment's notice if you have used school buses. I have already put another \$11,000 into four used buses in the first five months! Tires, batteries, fuel pumps, glow plugs, brakes, alternators, speedometers, air filters, fuel filters, oil changes; did I leave anything out? This is one of the cons when you purchase your own vehicles, especially used school buses. You will also have to consider fuel costs, especially if you have diesel buses.

### **Hire a Transportation Company**

A third way to transport students to your school is to outsource, like I did for 16 years. This method can work really well if you have enough students to

make it profitable for a third party to do so.

As you grow, the company can put more vehicles on without you having to purchase vehicles, pay drivers, buy fuel, insurance and pay for repairs.

On average, a transportation company will take about 20 to 25% of your after school rate weekly. I charged an after school rate of \$75 weekly and paid my service \$20 weekly per student, whether they came one day or five days; my service is paid the same. I have a single day rate of \$30 that covers me in case the child only attended one day. I would pay my transportation company their \$20 and I would still be in the black with a \$10 profit if a child was ill and didn't attend the rest of the week. I would then credit the remaining \$45 to the next week; no refunds, only credit. I sign no one up part-time, but I give them a break if they paid for the week and their child becomes ill.

I currently charge \$79/week with a day rate of \$30/day. If a student becomes ill and only attends one day, I will credit the parent \$49 to the following week. If they attend two days, I will credit them \$19. Attending at least three days is considered a full week. My program is for parents that work, who need to have their children somewhere after school. I will not let them buy one or two days per week.

Their child will fall behind the other students in their class. They will not be ready to test with their class and will fall out of favor with the program because they are being held back. From a business standpoint, I also do not want to edit my weekly fee. If they only want to come two or three days per week. I always steer them to my evening program. The least I would let anyone come to my school in the evening is twice per week.

**If you outsource in this manner, the best time to start is at summer**

**camp time.** This way, you can enroll many members ahead of this impending event. You can hire almost any transportation company to take your children on a couple of field trips for two hours on Tuesday and Friday each week. With that said, transportation companies have a set hourly rate, flat rate or vehicle rate already established. I paid my transportation company \$200 per school bus, per trip during the summer.

Before I hired them, I told them that I would hire them if they would roll over in the fall to a per person rate like I discussed above. If they would not, I searched until I found a company that would. You can easily sign up 25 students minimum for summer camp and that is enough for a company to make a little profit to start. I have enrolled as many as 87 new students for summer camp and had as high as 182 enrolled, with an average attendance of about 140 for summer camp.

I charge \$139 per week in this area with field trips included. My day rate for summer camp is \$50 and again, I do not let people sign up for half days or half weeks. I need to know who is here and plan my field trips accordingly, with no one dropping in at the last moment while we are pulling out to go on a trip! If you set all your policies in writing and explain everything at the point of enrollment, you will discourage parents from trying to run your school later on.

When using a professional transportation company, you will need to use a contract with them. This is included in this kit. While they are working for you each afternoon, the vehicles that they use will need to carry your magnetic signs for identification at the schools and for advertising. If they have ten vehicles and use only two for you, the two that they use for you will only work for you as they are under your employ. They will not carry any other adults on their bus, other than the pre-screened bus driver who you have met.

They will pick up no one other than your students while they are working for you in the afternoon. When using a service, they have back up vehicles and drivers in case a vehicle breaks down. If you are transporting yourself, you will need to consider a back up vehicle or driver for illness or just not showing up. This means that you need to know your routes intimately. You will pay your service weekly on the following Monday for the previous week.

Knowing your routes is of paramount importance whether you transport yourself or outsource. If you start during the summer, you will need to take the bus drivers around during the summer to each school and find out from the front office exactly where they want you to pick up. You will not want to be in a parent pick up line, as this will make you late to the next school.

Since you are a professional company with multiple schools at which to pick up, you will want to park in the daycare pick up line or behind the school buses as they designate to you. In other words, you need to get in and get out, whether you do it yourself or hire a service.

Make sure that you are also on their daycare provider list at the school, too. If you do decide to start at summer camp time, you can have another event for enrollment mid-summer for back- to-school. You should easily roll over the majority of your summer campers to after school or, if they don't need the after school program, put them into your traditional evening program.

This means that your transportation company could start with 40 or 50 students your first year. I have put a cap on enrollment at my school of 7,000 square feet of 175 and I have had a waiting list at times to actually get in here! This is dependent on the economy, competition, advertising, and your location.

Regardless of how you choose to get started, you can always change as your program evolves. You will need to make a bus list of all your students and the schools they attend. I have the name of the school, the phone number, the principal's name, the time they dismiss and the window of opportunity for pick up after dismissal time on my main list.

I break my 20 schools (used to pick up at 26 schools) into six routes for six vehicles. I give my bus drivers a list each day with the call-offs of the students not attending each day.

At enrollment, parents are instructed to call by noon if their child is not going to attend for any reason. If they do not do so, we charge a \$5 fee for making our bus wait at a school while we search for their child. This makes us late to another school in our route, yet it still happens from time to time.

All of your drivers need a cell phone so that you can be in touch with each other while they are driving for you. Each bus driver is given only their respective route of 3 or 4 schools at which to pick up with their call offs marked off with a colored marker. If a driver goes to a school and someone is not present other than who was already marked off, they need to call you and let you know before they leave. You cannot leave a vehicle unattended with children on it and go looking for a child, nor should you have to do that.

I put my driver on hold on one line and, on another line, I call the school to see if they were at school that day. It is the school's responsibility to put a child on your bus and your responsibility starts when they do so. If they were there, I make the school locate the child and get them on the bus. If they were not there, I call the parent at work immediately and find out where the child is and also ask why they did not inform us, since our bus is waiting at the school for their child. Sometimes an ex-spouse or a grandparent picks up the child, but that is still no excuse. You cannot ever

lose even one child, as they are precious cargo! The parent at work will be glad that you are this professional and that you called. And don't forget to charge them \$5 for not being professional!

In summary, outsourcing is a great way to go if you have a lot of students. Your company will have multiple vehicles with lots of seats, multiple drivers, take care of fuel, insurance, and maintenance for a piece of your pie each week.

Doing it yourself can be a headache, but less expensive, depending on the maintenance fees of your vehicles. You have control when you do it yourself until a vehicle breaks down. Now, go pick up some high paying students!

## **Chapter Review**

1. Establish the schools at which you will pick up and then establish a route(s).
2. Call the school board and speak to the transportation department and see if your school can be designated as an alternate drop-off point.
3. Get magnetic signs for a professional transportation company to use or for yourself. You can also do a professional "wrap" on your own van(s).
4. Set a fee for after school and summer camp and negotiate a flat rate for field trips and a per person rate for after school with a transportation company.
5. Consider establishing a second LLC if you decide to transport yourself.
6. Plan ahead for expenses of drivers, fuel, insurance, and maintenance of



your own vehicles.

7. Plan a start time and perform an internal promotion to your existing students.

8. Make a master bus list and individual bus lists for each route for your drivers.

9. Make sure you have all emergency numbers of the parents at work in case their child is not present at the school.

10. Make sure that you have your bus drivers' cell phone numbers.

11. Go on the routes with your bus drivers, meet the people in the front office with your driver and introduce them and establish a pick up point that works.

12. Make sure that you have a one-year optional renewable contract with an outside service, with an escape clause for both of you. They will be your employee.

13. Check to see that your professional transportation company has the proper insurance for the actual vehicles that they will be using for your school and their vehicle identification numbers (VINs.) Have them provide a copy to you each year, as well as the DOT and CDL licenses of their drivers for your file.

# **CHAPTER SEVEN**

## **Negotiating with a Transportation Service**

After you have established a rate for your after school program (and your summer camp program if you are having one), you have an idea of how much to offer your transportation company for pick up. Depending on your area, the after school rate ranges from as low as \$45 per week to \$130 per week.

The rate varies nationwide from \$15 to \$35 per week per child whether the child attends one day or five days.

I charged \$79 per week tuition and paid my transportation company \$20 per week per child. I charged a \$30 day rate to cover me for when a child only attended one or two days maybe due to illness. This means if a child attended one day, I paid my transportation company \$20 and my single day rate of \$30 gives me a \$10 net. If the child attended two days, my transportation company still got their \$20 and my day rate would have added to \$60 and gave me a \$40 net. If a child attended three days, then the \$79 tuition stood as three or more days equals a full week.

I now own my own company and don't out source anymore at this time. I charge a day rate to cover my overhead. One day in my school is \$30, two days equals \$60 and three days equals a full week. So I always operated in the "black" by covering my weekly rate for the transportation service with my day rate, with a net of \$10 if the student is with me only one day, a net of \$40 for two days and a net of \$55 for three days or more. You can even make two days equal a full week.

Most daycares charge you for a full week, even if your child is not there, to “hold your spot” This is a selling point for us, since we provide more value for the parent financially and we are teaching a talent and skill.

Once you have established a rate, you can start gathering bids for your school’s contract. You need to approach the transportation companies with the attitude that they will be fortunate to get your contract for their business, and that this program will be mutually beneficial for both of you.

You will hopefully become long-term business partners who will rely on each other. I paid my service \$105,000 the last year I used them.

The nationwide average transportation costs of \$25 to \$30 per child per week equates to approximately 20% to 25% of your tuition and is well worth it. Just bring the kids to me!

Remember, tuition is just one part of the monetary worth of an after-school student. You can choose from several different companies. You can also look at airport limousine and shuttle services, which I used at one time. Almost every city has an airport or there is one in a nearby city that will have shuttle buses or mini buses, as they are known in the business. The big tour buses are too big and limousines and town cars are too small.

The mini buses, and possibly some 15-passenger vans, will work very well. Mini buses carry approximately 28 to 33 passengers and can be navigated into schools very easily. Before you begin negotiations, check into what type of vehicles the prospective transportation company owns.

Once you place a call to a transportation company, armed with the amount you can afford to pay them, ask to speak to the owner. Usually when

someone asks to speak to the owner, it is a solicitor. You need to qualify yourself as a business owner who needs to speak to the owner about taking a bid on a one-year renewable contract with your business. This should get their attention.

Introduce yourself to the owner and tell him/her about your program and how it is working all over the U.S. and the potential of it for both of you. Excitement sells and being able to paint an effective picture helps. You do it all the time when you sell a martial arts program, so this should be no different for you once you understand how to present the program.

Most services have an established flat rate that they charge either per trip, per hour or per day. They may have never heard of a program such as ours, but it would be fair to say that anyone in the transportation business is looking for more business! I have spoken to many transportation services around the country, and they usually tell me their rates and how they do things.

That is when I explain how our program works and how we are going to pay them, not the other way around. You tell them that you will pay them on a weekly basis and you will pay them on a per child basis for a whole week, whether the child is transported one day or all five days. Also, you will want to sign a mutually renewable one-year contract.

The owner will need to furnish you with a copy of his insurance and the VINs of the vehicles that will be in your service. You will need to be added to his policy as “Additionally Insured.” This should all be standard good business for a client. When you are painting this picture to the transportation company, it helps if you already have a small number of students enrolled. This is done with an internal promotion with your existing students, if you already have a school.

No matter how you start, you are going to start small before you get big, and a transportation company is going to have to work with you to get you both going.

A smart service owner will recognize a lucrative deal when you present your program to him/her. Explain that this is a proven program, based out of Florida, with more than two decades of experience. Explain that your program is a constructive alternative to daycare, extended day at school, and babysitting. You offer martial arts to kids that will make a big difference in a lot of kids' lives and he can be a part of that. In fact, the owner may have kids and will understand your market.

If you start this program in the fall, you can pre-enroll over the summer and then open with a group. This is how I did it for my second school, ten miles away. My partner, and principal owner of the other school, listened to me and set a start date on a trailer sign outside the second school with a phone number that forwarded to my school.

We pre-enrolled more than 25 students before he opened. You can actually do this anytime by setting a start date, enrolling your internal promotion students, and using other advertising.

You need to choose three to five elementary schools and have their **times of dismissal** for the main school body, as well as the times of dismissal for van riders, if different. You will need to know how much of a window of opportunity you have to pick up at each school.

Hopefully, you will learn to say "no" earlier than I did. I tried picking up at 26 schools with my service and was constantly late and berated by the principals of the schools. This caused a lot of stress for everyone. That is

why I opened a second school to take care of all those schools. I currently pick up between 150 and 175 students at 20 schools and do it very well.

Meet the owner of the transportation company at your school and actually take him on a route of the schools from which you will be picking up and introduce him to the front office personnel. The office personnel will direct you where to pick up the kids after school. You will not be in the school bus line and you cannot be placed in the parent pick-up line, because it will make you late for all of your other pick-ups. You need to be in the daycare pick-up line so you can get in and out on time.

Once your transportation company has the names and locations of the schools, the times they will be dismissed, the window of opportunity to pick up and the names of the children at each school, a route can be established.

Middle schools have less need for after school care, so you will have fewer middle school students. Begin your negotiations \$1 to \$2 less than what you can afford to pay, and work from there.

I give my transportation service a raise when I raise my rates as well. This is good business. Middle schools in my area get out close to 4p.m., right around the time our after- school class starts. These students don't get to my school until about 4:15 while class is already in progress.

I do not run back to back classes like most schools. Our class time is 4-5p.m. in the afternoon, as that coincides with the average work day, 9a.m. - 5p.m.. We don't have another class from 5 - 6, as we are dismissing over 100 kids and cleaning the dojo before our 6pm classes begin. You could have another class from 5 to 6 but it doesn't fit the time when most parents get off of work in our area.

Another option is to have a class from 3:30 - 4:30 and another from 4:30-5:30 depending on the times your schools dismiss. The trick to having a transportation company is to get the owner of the company to work with you as you start with just a handful of students and grow with you. If you start enrolling two months before the kids go back to school, you can easily start with 25 to 50 students. The same is true for summer break, since these are the two impending events that really boost enrollment.

If you absolutely cannot get a transportation service yourself, call me after you have given it a good effort, and I will help you personally with a conference call with a service in your area.

Although you can start this program any time of the year, the absolute best time to start the MATA After-School program is for summer camp, which does not depend on transportation. Except for the areas that have year-round school, most children get out of school for summer vacation and most will need a place to go while their parents are working.

Since this is an impending event, you can easily start your MATA After-School program with 25 to 50 kids by pre-enrolling them for the first day of your summer martial arts sports camp. Most of these children will roll over into your after school program in the fall, some will go into your evening traditional program, and some will not continue.

The timing is important for most school owners, because if you are going to negotiate with a transportation company, you will need a substantial group of students. It is wonderful to open in the black! If you can get the school board to transport for you, you will not only enjoy a 100% net, but you can start your MATA After-School program at any time.

You won't have to pre- enroll a substantial group in order to afford a service. You can do an internal promotion and start with a handful and go from there. If you have your own transportation or purchase your own transportation for this program, you can also start at anytime. However, it is still better to start with a substantial group than it is to start with just a few!

## **Chapter Review**

1. Look for transportation companies in the phone book or online. Also check the Airport Limousine and Shuttle Services.
2. Make an appointment to meet with the owner of the company to discuss your business plan.
3. If you are going to outsource to a professional transportation company, the best time to start is summer camp when you can pre-enroll many students with no need of daily transportation.
4. Determine which and how many schools from which you will be picking up. I recommend starting with just 3 to 5 schools until you get things going.
5. I don't care what the transportation company regularly charges per hour or per day, you are going to negotiate another way for them to make money. You want to pay them only on a per person rate for after school. Summer camp is different; you can pay them a flat rate per vehicle to transport for your field trips.
6. Make sure you use a contract for this new business partner.
7. You will pay them on a weekly basis for a full week, whether a student attends one day or all five days. You will have a day rate to cover yourself; three days will always equal a week, never divide by five days and always



have it lopsided in your favor.

8. Know that there are always companies looking to transport for money, you just have to have enough students to make it profitable for them; you cannot put the cart in front of the horse!

9. Know what you can afford to pay your service on a per person basis weekly and then offer \$2 less to start negotiations. You can always go up one or two more dollars if needed to seal the deal.

10. Make sure that you have your bus drivers' cell phone numbers.

11. Go on the routes with your bus drivers, meet the people in the front office with your drivers and introduce them and establish a pick up point that works.

12. Make sure that you have a one-year optional renewable contract with an outside service with an escape clause for both of you. They will be your employee.

13. Check to see that your professional transportation company has the proper insurance for the actual vehicles that they will be using for your school and their vehicle identification numbers (VINs.) Have them provide a copy to you each year, as well as the DOT and CDL licenses of their drivers, for your file.

# **CHAPTER EIGHT**

## **Marketing. How to Get Into Schools.**

This is the area where you can save a lot of money and get a lot of return on your investment (ROI). There are two impending events in the MATA After-School program. The first is when the children get out of school for the summer and the second is when they go back to school in the fall, unless your area has the year-round school calendar.

Although you can start this program any time throughout the school year and still enroll enough students, you need to be focused on the two major enrollment events and take advantage of them.

I spend very little money advertising. When I do, it is two months before the children get out of school for the summer by advertising in the local newspaper under the summer camp section for kids and again in the same paper in the back-to-school section.

The real key to advertising is to know where to advertise cost effectively and where your clients will be looking – in the schools themselves! We also advertise with some small papers that cater just to kids for back to school and summer camp. If you can get a link from the school web site to your site, that is a good deal too. You will most likely have to be a business partner to get this with your school.

You need to get on the daycare provider list if they have one. You simply call the schools from which you will be picking up and ask if they have such a list; some schools do and some do not. For instance, you state who you are and that you will be picking up from their school in the fall and you wish to be placed on the after school provider list. They may ask whom you will

be picking up, and you will reply that the parents of the children will notify them in person and that you simply wish to be placed on the list.

Ask them to please send you a link to the list when they have done so. Many parents have told me that the school referred them to me when, in fact, the school simply gave them a list of what after school programs were available in the area and I was on it. It doesn't hurt that my school is named Altamonte American Karate Academy and is usually first on the list. They never get past me if they do call me first!

Schools will not take the liability of referring parents to you, and in fact, may offer a disclaimer and state that the list is just what is available and they are not recommending anyone in particular. Often the school's extended day program is full and therefore they need to offer a list of what is available in the area or they do not want the competition and won't refer anyone.

Next, you want to advertise in the school newspaper, if they have one and it accepts advertising. You also want to advertise in the PTA newsletter. Phone or email the school and ask for the name and number of the PTA president. I just purchased a half page ad that will run for the next six months at only \$15 per month, which goes to each and every parent in the whole school! You may be able to purchase a placement on their website, or in their emails. Two months before school lets out, I change my ad to a summer martial arts sports camp and I will give the PTA another \$30 to run that ad for the last two months.

The first way I try to get my brochures into a school is to simply walk in and see what is already in the school. If I see other types of advertising for softball, basketball, scouts, soccer, gymnastics, dance, etc., then there is a good chance I will have no problem getting in myself. This is the same method I use when I go into a retail establishment to see if I can get my

brochure rack in there. If I see rack cards from a gym or brochures for other businesses, then I know I will have a good chance.

On the other hand, if you go into a school and don't see any advertising in the lobby or their media room, you may have to end up seeing the principal or even the school superintendent in your area. You will want to get your brochure rack in the schools if at all possible.

If you cannot get your rack in, then you will want to get your brochures in their rack area or media room. If the school will not let you advertise with your brochures, see if they have any other brochures in the lobby or media room for anyone else and if they do, ask why.

You may need to become a business partner with the school like McDonald's, Home Depot and other businesses that provide food or arts and crafts to the school for consideration. This means you will sign a contract with the school that states you will do a teach-in one day per year where you come in for an hour and talk about the history of martial arts and how to handle adversity in school by seeking out a teacher or simple avoidance.

You can then demonstrate the power of martial arts by breaking some boards or concrete and hand out your brochures to all in attendance. You will actually get new prospects by fulfilling your contractual obligation with the school. You will need to provide something of value to hand out to the students.

I have given 100 one-month-free gift certificates worth \$129 each, or \$12,900 total value, to the school to hand out to the honor roll students. This is good for the evening program only and not for existing students. This gift certificate praises the student's academic achievement and is

signed by both the principal of the school and you. In return, the school usually puts your school name in their school newspaper, their marquees for a week and will ultimately let you have your brochures in their school.

Most schools in my area will not allow the send home of brochures anymore. This is mainly because there are so many others doing what I am doing at the same schools. I created my own competition!

If they still will not let you have your brochures in the school, you may ask that, if you collate the brochures in lots of 25 or 30 and put rubber bands around them, they would please put them in the teachers' mailboxes for a one-time send-home to give the students a choice of something fun and educational to do after school, or for summer camp, if you are going to have one.

Having brochure racks with your after school brochures in them in businesses near your school is another great way to advertise.

I have brochure racks in cleaners, fast food restaurants, ice cream shops, tire shops, tanning salons and businesses with high traffic in the strip mall near my school or the places that I frequent and do business. The list is as big as you want it to be and should be checked and restocked every one to two weeks. Getting a brochure rack into a place of business that you frequent is not difficult.

Look at your current member roster and see where your clients work. You will find that you have a lot of great locations where you have an "in" to place your brochure rack. The parents already like you, so if a rack can be put anywhere, they are the ones to do it for you.

You can put your brochure rack in apartment complexes near your school.

You may offer an incentive to the apartment manager such as a free membership for his or her child. I have offered free memberships whenever I had to get into a high traffic area that I thought would create info calls and in every case, no one has ever taken me up on a free membership. There seems to be no value in something for free, but I still offer it if necessary.

Sometimes, you can get the manager to put your brochure in all of their new tenant packages. If they all say no, take a few brochures and tack them up in the laundry room on the bulletin board.

Large lead boxes are more difficult to place and really not necessary unless you have multiple salespeople on your staff and they are paid on commission. If you have multiple salespeople and they work on commission, you want to create gross that wasn't already coming in the door by having your sales staff create appointments using lead boxes. If you basically run the school yourself or do not have a sales staff working on commission, it does not matter how the new prospects call, as long as they call, and putting out small unobtrusive brochure racks is much easier.

One of the most successful ways to advertise your MATA After-School program is to put out snipe or roadside signs, where allowed by law. I say that, because in most areas it is illegal to place signs on the right-of-way without a permit. You will notice, however, that it is done just about everywhere. Now with that said, you do not have to place hundreds of signs and draw too much attention to yourself. If you can, place a small sign on the elementary school property like the scouts, soccer and basketball signs you may see at the school. The code enforcement people usually will leave those signs alone, but you will then be under the principal's watchful eye. If the principal asks you to remove your sign, do so immediately.

Your sign should read something like this: After School Martial Arts, Free Transport, phone number and website. That is all you need on the sign. You do not need your school name, logo or anything else, since all you want is for someone to call you, and they will.

If you want to know how your signs are doing, ask your prospects how they heard of you, or who referred them to you, and they will tell you they saw a sign. Ask them where they saw the sign and you will know exactly which signs are working.

People actually wait until the very last minute to enroll their children in an after school program, and if you are there in your uniform, you create a vision that will attract prospects to you. You cannot sell on school property, but you can talk about your program, hand out a brochure and make an appointment for later that day at your studio for pick-up the following week.

Some schools have open house night and you can do the same thing there. Just call the schools from which you will, or want, to pick up and ask about open house and orientation day and see if it would be okay to be present. At the very least, drop by and leave some brochures if they will not let you be there in person. I have always been invited to all of these events with open arms. Remember, you are the good guy who is going to help the children learn structure, discipline, and manners, as well as self-confidence.

You want to make a good first impression when you go to a school and it doesn't hurt to drop by once in a while with a box of donuts for the front desk staff, since these are the people with whom you will usually be dealing, and these are the people who will be dealing with the public.

Another way to get into a school is to call and ask if you can come and

teach a P.E. class on the martial arts. The schools love to have guest teachers and the kids always look forward to something new and different. Bring some hand targets and blockers so the kids can interact with each other once you teach a proper kick, punch, and block.

Be certain to explain they are to use physical force for protection only and bring plenty of brochures to hand out after class!

Donate book covers or school planners or buy space in the school directory. You can ask at the front desk how to do this. Sometimes this is done from an outside source and has to be done for the next school year, since they are handed out to the children at the beginning of the school year.

A really big day for enrollment is the actual orientation day at all of the schools. The only tough part of this day is that it is usually held the same day at most of the schools. This means that you will have to run around to several schools yourself and/or have some help.

You can have your existing students infiltrate like Ninjas into their school and hand out brochures for you. Offer two incentives. For any referral who joins, the parent will receive a free week of after school tuition, or if they are an evening student, a free month will be added to their existing membership.

Simply have each child put their name on each brochure they hand out and qualify the new prospect when they call. You also want to reward the Ninja who did the work by giving them a martial arts T-shirt or some other small gift.

You can even make a contest among your students and have a grand



prize, second and third prize, etc., for the most new students referred within a month. They all get a prize and you win by getting new students. There are some school principals and superintendents around the country who will not let you advertise in their schools no matter what. The Ninjas program works in these cases.

You can also stand off school property on the public sidewalk and wear your uniform while holding up your after school sign and handing out brochures as the parents pull out of the school and stop before they go onto the highway. You only need to do this for one to three days for about half an hour to reach this group of people. I know this is sweat equity, but it is a last resort effort if needed.

You can make a short presentation to the PTA. They are always looking for guest speakers and again, bring your brochures. Explain the features and benefits of your program and how you are an alternative to daycare, extended day, and babysitting.

The whole gist of everything I have mentioned is to advertise where your clients are looking. It is all very cost effective or free. Offer to put on an exciting exhibition at a school assembly. They are always looking for something free and exciting for the kids. Of course, bring your brochures to hand out to all who attend.

You will need to go around to the schools and businesses every week or two and check your signs and brochures. I have used radio, TV and the local newspaper, but the best ROI is the way I do things now. You can do door hangers in your neighborhood and advertise occasionally in the local small newspapers or even do some direct mailings, since they all work.

Nothing is more gratifying than to have just put out a \$2.50 sign or a five-

cent brochure and go back to your office and have an info call make an appointment from your own effective labor. Once you get established, you will only need the brochures, signs and the schools referring people to you.

Another inexpensive means of advertising is to have banners made for “After School Martial Arts with Transportation Provided” and “Summer Martial Arts Sports Camp”, including your phone number and website, and placed on the front of your building prior to these two impending events. In some areas, you may need to get a permit from the city and may only have it up for 30 days, so check with code enforcement first.

You can also use a trailer sign, usually twice per year for 30 days, to advertise these two events. You can rent a trailer sign and then use letters to advertise your Transported After School Program, Free Uniform with Registration, Hurry, Space is Limited! Phone Number and website.

For summer camp you can state; Summer Martial Arts Sports Camp, Field Trips Included, Free Uniform with Registration, Hurry, Space is Limited! Phone Number and website.

You will need to call code enforcement in your area to see how to get a temporary permit to use a trailer sign in front of your business. I have a permanent case sign in front of my building that I change all the time.

If you are going to have a new school built or you are moving to a new location, you may want to check into getting permanent signage where you can change the sign. You can also get your advertising on your transportation company’s vehicles by getting magnetic signs made that have your program and phone number. If you are not going to outsource to a professional transportation company, you can advertise on your own vehicles. Actually, even if you do outsource, you can still do this.

Although it is quite costly, you can rent a billboard in your area. You also have the T-shirts your students wear to school to advertise your program and to show team spirit.

You can do a corporate promotion by simply making a list of the larger businesses within a two-mile radius of your location. Call them and get their e-mail address. Send an email about your program, and then visit the corporation.

Ask if they will put a brochure rack at the front desk, lobby, or in the lunchroom, or even put some brochures on the bulletin board. Ask if they will do a send-home to all of their employees or mention in their corporate newsletter either the after school or summer camp, so their employees will have a choice of something fun and educational for their children to do.

You may advertise on social media these days but be careful what you put out there as the Department of Children and Families (DCF) also sees this. If you are advertising Mom's Night Out or Ninja Nights or sleepovers and you charge a fee, you are charging a fee for care since the parents are not present.

You can sell wrist bands for \$25 that enables the holder to get food and drinks. Have some of your students bring their uniform and perform a karate demo so that their guests can get impressed and you can get new members this way. The theme is still martial arts related.

There are so many ways to advertise this program, and once you get a good base, you can advertise like I do. My net is fantastic because I don't spend money on advertising and marketing unnecessarily, although I did everything originally to get where I am these days — on cruise control.

## **Chapter Review**

1. You can offer to teach a PE class or come to the yearly “Teach-In” as a way to get into the school and/or to give out some of your brochures to the students.
2. Make some gift certificates for one free month of evening classes for the Honor Roll students.
3. Buy plastic brochure holders and place your brochures in businesses around your school and in the businesses around the schools that you will pick up at and service them regularly.
4. Buy snipe signs that are corrugated plastic and advertise on one side.
5. Get current parents to refer students to you for a free week.
6. Get your students to refer their friends at school to you and give their parents a free week and give the student a prize, too.
7. Start a membership drive in your school with prizes in sight right in the lobby like a BMX bike, Rip Stik, Nintendo DS, Roller Blades, Kick N’ Go scooter. Put a poster on the door on the way out with students’ names and referrals for these prizes. Get all of your students and parents working for you!
8. You can have outside banners made for your school.
9. Make sure you have magnetic signs made for your vehicles if they aren’t already painted with your school name and number on it.

10. Consider getting a trailer sign to advertise just before summer camp or back to school for 30 days with a permit from your city code enforcement.
11. Check your member roster for where the parents work and consider getting them to place a brochure rack in the business.
12. Consider making door hangers and canvass neighborhoods on the weekend.
13. Make sure that you have brochures in the schools, either in your own rack or theirs.
14. Have your snipe sign on the way out of the school (where tolerated.)
15. Be on their daycare provider list if they have one.
16. Buy advertising in the school newspaper if they have one and accept it.
17. Consider being a business partner with the school if that is what you need to do in order to be in the school and even if you don't have to.
18. If you have Mom's Night out, or Ninja Nites, make sure you do not charge a fee for this event, as that is considered by DCF as paying for care. Charge a fee for food and drinks by selling a wristband for \$25 that enables the bearer to get food and drinks. I'm not selling care!

# **CHAPTER NINE**

## **Staffing Your After School Program**

Staffing is not that difficult. I have tried several different ways and I will tell you to hire within your own system whenever possible. If you hire outside your system, you will have to retrain them to your system, make sure they do things your way, and absolutely, positively have a criminal background check on everyone you hire.

I raise my own staff from kids all the way up. You cannot get a criminal background check in Florida on juveniles, but if they have been with you five or six days per week for five or six years, you pretty well know they haven't done any hard time. When they become adults and are still working for you as my staff does, get these criminal background checks done anyway and put them in a file.

In Florida, for instance, summer camp is exempt from DCF licensing but you still need background checks on all those who come into contact with your students. I have them on all my staff just in case DCF requires release of them.

When you hire from within, the student and parents know you and your program thoroughly. You need to have a conference with the new junior employee and at least one parent regarding your policies, expectations, salary, benefits (if any), vacations, sick days, raise structure and his or her future with your company. You must have policies in writing to which everyone agrees and have them signed.

I have had employees with me for five to 10 years because I treat them fairly. I pay very well, set a good example, give bonuses, paid vacations in

summer and at Christmas for salaried employees, and have group insurance available, of which I pay half for those who qualify.

You might begin very small by starting with yourself, a significant other and maybe one junior. People often ask me how many teachers they need. I tell them they need whatever it takes to get the job done well. Since you are not a daycare and subject to a certain student/ teacher ratio, it will be up to you to determine what it takes to do the job.

You may have 30 or 40 white belts in your new class and therefore, you will need two or three teachers in that room(s) to teach. Five- and six-year- olds are taught in one group in my school because they learn at a different level than older children. They will have their own teacher. New children who are older will also have their own teacher. White belts who have been in the school for two or three months and are working towards their yellow belt testing will require a third teacher and so on.

I usually run six or seven teachers for 150 to 175 students, depending how the students are broken up by rank and age and whether it is after school or summer camp. I run more teachers during summer camp because the kids are here all day. There are field trips with chaperones and I overlap the teachers so they don't burn out or break the rules for working youth.

This brings up a valid point; you need to make sure that you follow your state labor laws and do not violate them. Never pay under the table and make sure you follow all the deductions for state and federal taxes on your payroll. Make sure that you do everything above board and legally.

I start hiring at 14 years of age. These junior or assistant teachers can be at intermediate belt levels where they can teach a small group of beginners their basics, as long as an adult is on the floor with them. I have assistant

teachers that are 14, 16, and 17 years of age in my employment. I have five adults in the school at all times. It all depends on how large your school is and how many students you have and what level they are. I start juniors at whatever the minimum wage is, rounded up to the next whole dollar.

The office manager arrives at noon, since the After-School students start arriving at 2:30. As more busloads arrive, we overlap staff. In other words, I have some staff here early, cleaning and preparing for the day, more staff comes in at 2:30 and still more at 3:00 and 3:30.

I also dismiss after class the same way. Some instructors leave at 4:00, while others leave every half hour until 6:00 p.m., when I start my evening classes. We are down from 5:00 until 6:00 for cleaning the snack area and mopping the entire training area each and every day, especially the bathrooms. We have kids dressing to go home, parents arriving to pick up children, cleaning, and setting up for the evening classes.

I only have, need, and want three classes per day; four o'clock, six o'clock, and seven o'clock, with no seven o'clock class on Friday and no Saturdays or Sundays. You could do this, too, if you want, when you run a large MATA After-School program. You need to have weekly meetings with your staff at a time when all can attend. Even if you only meet for half an hour, this will keep you all on the same page as far as duties, expectations, classes to be taught that day/week, and upcoming events to be covered, such as testing, seminars, Ninja Nites, etc. This is the time to discuss the good, the bad, and the ugly. Hopefully you can keep a lot of issues from becoming ugly.

I want to keep my staff with me for years and years, so I make sure they do the job the way I want it done, and I make sure I listen to their needs and goals and make sure I give them what they want, to the best of my ability.



You probably have some teenagers in your evening class looking for an after school and/or summer job, and being an assistant teacher is a whole lot better than flipping burgers, mowing grass, or driving nails! Develop your teachers yourself and you can't go wrong.

### **Chapter Review**

1. Always try to hire staff from within; they know your system and you know who they are and how they act.
2. Make sure that you follow your State and Federal labor laws for your employees, especially those who are 14 to 18.
3. Never cut corners and always pay with regular checks and either withhold for taxes or give 1099 forms to your employees.
4. Use as many teachers as it takes to get the job done.
5. Have policies in place for staff and make sure their parent is present at hiring and everyone understands your policies and procedures for sick days, vacations, raises, bonuses, insurance, etc. Consider MAIA's Employee Handbook, if needed.
6. Have weekly meetings with your staff and discuss your game plan on what is to be taught each week. Have them see who is ready for promotion and who is having difficulties. Be in touch with your staff and students in each class.
7. Establish duties such as cleaning, teaching, etc. and adhere to them.
8. For summer camp, overlap your employees throughout the day. Two on at opening and have more come in before class starts at 10:00 a.m. The

ones that come in early leave first for lunch and leave first at the end of the day. This cuts unnecessary payroll and loitering.

9. Get whistles for your staff for field trips during the summer and give all the rules, expectations, and consequences for not following these rules to your students and staff before going on all field trips.

# **CHAPTER TEN**

## **Codes and Exemptions**

This can be a scary prospect to some school owners, but let me assure you that I have dealt with many daycare-licensing directors, their attorneys, and even State Attorneys to stay exempt from daycare licensing. If you absolutely have to become a licensed school-age childcare, there is too much income to be earned not to do so, but I strongly advise against it if you don't have to.

What does anyone in childcare know about teaching the martial arts? Their stock-in-trade is supervision and care and ours is teaching the martial arts' physical and philosophical character building skills. This very statement is at the root of being exempt in many cases.

Some states actually have a code statute that will say that a facility is not considered a daycare and is not subject to regulation as a daycare if the attendees are free to come and go at will, without regard to the presence of a parent or other responsible adult to care for them.

Even though we are always liable for our students in the after school program and in our traditional program and can never be negligent or abusive, we are not in the supervision and care business. At enrollment, it will be in writing on the enrollment form for all new prospects stating so.

There should be a paragraph on your new member enrollment form that states: "I, (NAME), acknowledge that XYZ Martial Arts School is not a daycare and that their stock-in-trade is not supervision and care, but rather, their intent is to teach martial arts' physical and philosophical character building skills. Furthermore, I acknowledge that my child is free to come

and go, and if they are to stay at the martial arts school, it is at my direction and not the school's." Signed, (SIGNATURE).

We operate an open access facility for all of our members. No daycare would ever have a patron sign such an agreement, because their stock-in-trade is supervision and care and they are not a free-to-come-and-go facility.

This does not mean that you are going to have five-year-olds running out your door and into traffic. Some licensing directors have asked me what I would do if this happened, trying to bait me into not being a true free to come and go facility. I said that in over two decades, that it has never happened and that is a true statement.

I have had students not want to take class because of illness or maybe they were not confident in sparring yet and tried to get out of class. My answer would be to find out why a student didn't want to take class and then redirect and motivate them and work extra time with that student.

I have had some middle school students ride their bike over from a near-by middle school and I had their parents sign the above statement, so that we understood each other about liability. "Do you know of a student who has left my facility that was hurt, abused or neglected?" You cannot condemn a program on an event that hasn't happened.

You are crossing over in to **speculative law** and not DCF's business. As a free to come and go open-access facility, children come and go at all times every day, usually when their transportation arrives but some middle school kids just leave after class and ride their bikes that they rode here.

You can simply call the local DCF office and ask for the web site so you can

look under the rules and codes for exemptions from child care licensing. Codes vary from state to state and from county to county in some states like Florida.

There are 67 counties in Florida and all operate under the code 65C-22/008 (2) (c) 3. Six counties have their own individual government and make changes to this state code. Just 90 miles away from our school in Pinellas County, you cannot provide transportation! You can out-source to a transportation company and have your parents contract with them. This is another reason to separate your transportation company from your school if you drive your own vehicles.

In some states the codes only allow 10 or 12 hours per week after school with other people's children and they count the time from when you actually pick up. **If you outsource or separate your transportation from your school and have parents contact with the transportation company separately, the time wouldn't actually start ticking but don't give out any information at this point.**

You only need to ask if someone would please email or fax you the page or pages (you do not need the whole licensing book) that lists the types of organizations and facilities that are exempt from childcare licensing. You may find that you fall within their guidelines as an exempt entity.

One state says that you are exempt as long as you teach one sole activity and only to school-age children and for not more than 16 hours per week, which is perfect for after school. Still other states will have a code that teaching a specific talent or skill like dance, gymnastics or self-defense will be exempt. Then there are some states that have very strict rules with everything that involves children.

In all the years that I have been operating this type of program, I can tell you that codes and exemptions change. As elected officials change, so do the viewpoints of what is allowed. Programs that may have been operating for years without being licensed as a daycare may come under scrutiny. Usually an anonymous phone call to daycare licensing officials stating that you are operating an unlicensed program is what triggers an investigation.

The fact of the matter is that you are operating a licensed program. You are most likely licensed through your martial arts federation to operate a martial arts school and teach martial arts. A Certification from the Martial Arts Teachers' Association (MATA) would look good as well. You are most definitely licensed by your city to operate a martial arts school on your certificate of occupancy. Yes, it is true that you are not a licensed daycare because you are not in the daycare business. All of your advertising should state this.

Your info call should also state what you are and are not. Your conversation at point of enrollment with a new prospect should also reflect that you are specifically not a daycare and that the only reason to come to your school is to take martial arts.

Also, state that even though you are a free-to-come-and-go facility, you do not want students to leave actual class time early to go do something else like sports, haircuts, etc. Do not let parents use you as a daycare. They can use you instead of a daycare and have their kids learn a talent and skill.

Parents check off on each of our policies and procedures and our week-to-week contracts that contain our disclaimer. I give them a copy and keep a copy on file. If parents abuse our policies and try to use me as a daycare, I will tell them that it has to stop or they should do the other after-school activities and come to our evening program.

## **Don't let parents run your school!**

This could eventually lead to you crossing daycare lines of exemption and causing you grief. The time before and after the actual class time should be a “necessary transition time that is incidental to your program.”

Some daycare exemption codes state that an after school program will be exempt so long as the program sticks to the “sole activity” of that program, whether it is dance, gymnastics or self-defense, but is not limited to these particular talent and skill classes.

In Florida, all after-school programs are now considered child care programs and have to go through DCF questionnaires to get an exemption.

Level 2 background checks have to go through the DCF Clearinghouse at this writing. Some of us are working to change the existing codes in Florida at this time.

If you get a visit from a daycare licensing official stating that they have received a complaint that you are operating an unlicensed daycare program, invite the person into your office and close the door. Ask for an actual copy of this “so called complaint.” He or she will probably tell you that you will have to ask for it in writing.

Politely take control of the situation and do not allow the official to tour your facility or ask for or get parents' names and phone numbers to call, because that would be a violation of their confidentiality with your company. You need to have a confidentiality clause in the actual after school and summer camp that states: Confidentiality Clause: Altamonte American Karate Academy will not release the above personal and private

information to any third party for reasons of sales, marketing or for any other reason. This clause should legally prevent DCF or anyone else from requiring this personal information to call.

You can give the DCF field worker a copy of a blank after school agreement that has this clause in it and the clause about you are a free to come and go open access facility and children come to you because they want to learn the martial arts and stay with you at the direction of the parents.

State that you are not a daycare and that you are specifically not in the supervision and care business, but rather, your intent is to teach the martial arts' physical and philosophical character building skills. Give the person a blank copy of your after school agreement with your disclaimer in it and that is all.

Tell the person that although you understand that it is their legal job to investigate all complaints, since you do not operate a daycare, you are really not under the jurisdiction of daycare licensing. Let the official know that your first concern is for children, too, and that you understand the concern. Get the person's business card, supervisor's name and number, again request a copy of the alleged complaint and then nicely ask him or her to leave your martial arts school.

Make sure that all of your staff is educated on these procedures and that they are trained not to allow these officials to intimidate them or snoop around your school or its records when you are not there. Train your staff to tell any official to come back at a certain time when you will be there to handle such a visit and to give out absolutely no information.

Usually, the sticking points to an after school program have boiled down to the time before and after actual class time. Again, these are necessary



transitional times to and from your program that are incidental to your program. The officials may argue this point. They may not want to agree that you are a true free-to-come- and-go facility. They may bait you by asking you what you would do if a five- or 10- year old wanted to leave your facility. Yes, we are a free to come and go open access facility and although parents pick up children at all times daily, we have never had a child just leave on their own unless their transportation has arrived. You have always operated a free-to- come-and-go facility for your afternoon classes, evening classes and weekend classes; your MATA After-School program is no different.

In some areas where a martial arts school has been operating incorrectly, the state may be temporarily correct with their complaint. This does not mean a program cannot be tweaked to comply without breaking and becoming something you are not – a daycare.

If the state brings up the fact that you are transporting students and they feel, therefore, you have to be licensed through daycare licensing, know that **transportation is a non-issue**.

How a child gets to and from your facility is irrelevant, and not in any daycare codes that I know of, and if it is, it could be effectively argued otherwise. The only exception I have seen is in Pinellas County, Florida where transportation was an issue so we simply had our schools out-source to either a professional transportation company or set up their own vehicles as a separate LLC and have parents contract with it.

If your school comes under the daycare licensing magnifying glass for running an “unlicensed program,” you may have to alter your program. You may opt to change your time where kids play board games and do homework, even if it is incidental to your program, to nothing but school

talks each day on martial arts related subjects. This would cater to the philosophical and character building skills part of your program that goes along with the physical class before; thus staying within many states' guidelines of "sole activity."

Summer camp is a different issue. You may need a simple youth camp license or an American Camping Association license in your area for summer and that hoop is not too hard to jump through. You need to make sure that you advertise in your brochures and flyers that you are specifically not a daycare. My brochure says: We are a licensed Martial Arts School, NOT a Daycare!

Do not advertise homework time, snack time or play time, because these activities need to be incidental to the program. Stick to martial arts, because it has enough features and benefits without adding more to the program.

If a child wants to do homework before or after class, you don't have to stop them. You merely cannot help them, nor should you over-embellish your program by saying that you will. If the parents have directed their children to do so, you can tell the children that their parents want them to do their homework.

If you get a visit from DCF and they try to make you become a licensed daycare, have them tell you specifically **what exactly are you doing that would make them think this**. This way, we can address the specific points they make. You can then call me and we will see if we can make the "necessary" changes they pointed out. If not, you may need to get your attorney with me and address the issue after I mentor them on the situation.

## **Chapter Review**

1. Anonymously find out the daycare exemptions for after school programs and summer camp programs for your area. Don't pick a scab by identifying yourself up front and asking someone if you need to be licensed!
2. Make sure that all parents sign your paperwork that has the free-to-come-and-go policy in it. Your school always has been a free-to-come-and-go school and it will continue to be such. Children don't drive and, therefore, they will leave when their transportation shows up, unless they rode their bike.
3. If you have a visit from DCF, get a copy of their complaint, invite them into your office, get their business card and ask for the name and phone number of their boss. Show them your occupational license, your sensei or teaching degree/ license and ask them to leave. Do not let them talk to your staff or children and do not let them walk around your school; you will get back in touch with their boss. (Phone me!) If you have a complaint for negligence and/or abuse, the DCF worker will come in with an officer of the law and if they don't, call the police to have someone there. If this is the complaint, they can speak to any child they want alone in your office or outside with no parent, legal representation or you present. If it is this type of complaint, you cannot ask these people to leave.
4. If you have my support package, you will have a MATA After-School license hanging in your lobby that says exactly what you are and are not and that you are a licensed martial arts school, not a daycare, and you are a free-to-come-and-go facility.
5. Basically, stick to one sole activity, martial arts. Homework is meant to be done at home, however, they may be able to do it if it is incidental to your classes and not part of your program while waiting to go home.

6. Don't market or advertise homework as part of your program; you are a martial arts teacher and not a tutor and that is not why you are in business.
7. Do not let parents run your school! Set policies and procedures at the point of enrollment and adhere to them.
8. Do not let parents regularly pick up early from your actual martial arts class to go do something else. You are not a daycare or way-station to go to something else!
9. Make sure your staff knows how to field a visit from DCF if you are not on the premises.

# **CHAPTER ELEVEN**

## **Subsidizing and Grants**

To my knowledge, you have to be a licensed daycare to receive subsidies or vouchers from the state for lower income families for after school programs. I used to receive these funds, but I would have had to become a licensed daycare to continue receiving these funds. I chose not to succumb to the state and become something that I am not — a daycare.

The state knows absolutely nothing about the martial arts and I don't really know anything about the daycare business. I know that I do not want to be a professional babysitter.

Another venture you may look into is becoming a separate non-profit corporation licensed as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit athletic charity for children. Some school owners have told me they were not able to put their brochures in schools until they became a non-profit venture. If you choose to go this route and have a non-profit after school program, it does not mean that you cannot earn income.

Obviously you have to pay rent, utilities, maintenance, buy equipment to operate, telephone, advertising, and have a payroll for yourself and staff to operate. You will have to go over this with your accountant and attorney before you go through the process, which takes about three months, and in Florida, costs approximately \$2,500.

Once you get your license, you will be eligible for grants from corporations which you can put in an escrow account and subsidize parents who may have lost their jobs and were going to either drop out of your school or couldn't afford to join your school. There are many good kids who could

benefit from martial arts training, but can't afford the program, so this route may be the answer. I know of school owners who have already obtained their non-profit status and have obtained grants to fix their schools.

I spoke with one school owner who told me he was able to call companies' human resource departments and get donations to give away at a benefit he is doing in a mall. He received airline tickets, hotel rooms, sportswear, and many other donations just by asking and providing his non-profit license.

You can still operate your traditional program as you always have by separating your traditional evening and/ or weekend program from your non- profit licensed after school program.

I am merely bringing you different opportunities to look into that you may not have thought of or followed up on yet. After all the years I have been operating an after school program, even I cannot get into each and every school the way I want. The main point is to not accept a "no" from someone on the phone until you have thoroughly researched the matter yourself, and there are subsidies and grants out there if you look.

## **Chapter Review**

1. Vouchers or subsidies from the State can only be obtained if you are a licensed school-aged child care.
2. You may already have a parent organization with your Karate or Tae Kwon Do that has a 501 (c)(3) non-profit license that you may get under easily.
3. Check with your CPA and/or attorney and consider the features and

benefits, as well as the pros and cons, of getting a non-profit license.

4. A non-profit license may open doors for you with grants.

5. A non-profit license may enable you to open doors at schools that were previously closed. Investigate first before taking the plunge.

# **CHAPTER TWELVE**

## **How to Answer the Phone**

This is where the initial contact with the new prospect actually starts. It is important to be enthusiastic, knowledgeable and forthright, and it doesn't hurt to have a personality! What is it that you want out of an information call?

You want the full name of the new prospect and the child's, the home and work numbers, and you want to set an appointment for that very day, because they are a hot prospect now. You also want to know how they heard about you or who referred them to you.

The prospect wants to know features, benefits and price, which is exactly what you are going to give them. I know some martial art schools shy away from prospects who may be shopping different schools, looking for the lowest price, thinking that must be the best value, while we all know that is not necessarily so.

These school owners are taught not to give the prices of their memberships over the phone and I disagree with that philosophy. I taught sales in the health club business. I personally wrote more than one million dollars in gross sales within one year, in one location, by giving good phone presentations and following up with callbacks.

I know how I am; if someone will not tell me the prices of their programs when I ask, I will not go there.

There are different ways to do it for the traditional program than the after school program. I will only touch on the phone presentation for the



traditional program, since this manual is for the latter.

You can still answer inquiries of how much your classes cost with questions such as, “What is your name? My name is so and so. How did you hear of us? Who referred you?” You have established control immediately by doing this and you have put the inquiry on a personal level by giving your name and getting theirs and using their name whenever appropriate.

You can let them know all about your features and the benefits of your school and style as well as class times.

Let the prospect know that you have several different programs and that you don’t know exactly which program is going to be right for them. For instance, if your programs start at \$99 per month, which would be your lowest-priced program that may be based on a three-year commitment.

Everyone always advertises their lowest price on everything to get prospects to come in and shop. Of course, this membership will be available to them when they come in, but you may sell them a one-year membership for \$129 per month.

If someone persisted, I would tell them what they wanted to know. However, I would be looking at my caller ID to make sure there was a name and number on it.

If my caller ID said unknown, I would merely tell them that I would be happy to discuss all the programs in detail when they came down and took a free class and looked around. Ask the prospect to commit to an appointment for a free class or free week to look at your school. You can take a look at them as well to see if they have the right attitude and motives for learning the martial arts, which is a backdoor close.

Now, back on track with MATA After-School. The same criteria exists, except you will definitely tell them the price after you have explained all the features and benefits of your wonderful alternative to daycare, extended day at school and babysitting. The prospect calls and asks how much your after school program costs. You will take immediate control by giving your full name and asking their name and also asking the names of the child(ren) and using their names whenever you can. This personalizes the phone call and knocks down any barriers that they may put up between you.

Then you qualify them by asking how they heard of your program; did someone refer them? This is important because you can be very knowledgeable and go on and on about how wonderful your program is for five or ten minutes, only to find out that they are not even in your area and you don't pick up from the school their children attend. You feel like an idiot and you have to refer them to another martial arts school.

When a prospect tells me they heard about me through the phone book or on the Internet, I ask them where they live and where their children go to school, all within the first twenty seconds of the info call. If they are out of the area, I get their name and number and tell them I will have someone who services that area call them with information. I then personally call another martial arts school proprietor and give them the info call. This way, they know that I gave them a direct referral and that I will be looking for the same in the future!

Now that you have qualified the prospect and know they are in your area, you are ready to jump into action. Since you have their name, use it, because it is the most wonderful sound in the world to them. I answer their question on price with questions establishing immediate control.

I ask if their child is currently in daycare, extended day at school or babysitting after school while you are working. This establishes the need for our MATA After-School program and also finds out if the parent is currently working or planning to go back to work and is interested in our program instead of the above programs.

If their child is not involved in these activities, ask if they are new to the area or are planning to go to work and will need after school care. If they do not, then let them know you have a wonderful traditional program in the evening at six o'clock and invite them to take a free class that very evening.

It may simply be a parent who wants their child to do something constructive after school. I personally do not accept drop-offs after school for several reasons. The MATA After-School students pay me three times the net that the traditional student pays and I need all the spaces available for this.

I also do not want a group of parents in my snack area using space that the after school students need to eat snacks. I do believe that all parents should have access to their children at all times, although I separate them in an enclosed, air conditioned area with one-way glass that keeps them from walking onto the training floor or interrupting class at any time.

However, I do not want to promote having a lot of parents in my viewing area for after school. This area is full for my evening classes. I would tell the parent that unless they want to pay daycare prices, the evening class is less expensive.

You may have the occasional parent who doesn't need the MATA After-School program, but doesn't mind paying for this service, so be aware of

this prospect. Give them what they want, as long as it doesn't interfere with your format.

### **Sample Phone Call**

Me: "Good afternoon. USA Karate, how can I help you?"

Prospect: "Yes, I would like to know how much the after school program costs."

Me: "My name is Melvin Grant, and yours?"

Prospect: "Holly Smith."

Me: "Holly, how did you hear about our program; did someone refer you?"

Prospect: "No, I found you online."

Me: "What city do you live in?"

Prospect: "Altamonte Springs."

Me: "Great, how many children do you have and what school do they attend?"

Prospect: "Two children, Sandy and Brett, and they go to Spring Lake elementary."

Me: "Holly, we are batting 1000 so far, because I have been picking up at that school for 26 years and it is really close to my academy. Are Sandy and Brett currently in daycare, extended day, or babysitting after school right now?"

Prospect: "Yes, they are in extended day at school right now."

Me: "Holly, we have a wonderful constructive alternative to that program right here at our academy.

It's a week-to-week program where you do not pay if your children are not

here a week. At a daycare, they charge you whether you are there or not and even in your extended day program at the school, you will pay extra for the days the kids are out of school all day long. For instance, the in-service days and certain holidays like Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, President's Day, teacher's workdays, and student holidays all cost extra where you are now, if they are even open for these days. At our academy, there will be no extra charge! If you have paid for the week and your child gets sick on Tuesday or Wednesday, you will be given credit for the next week, because three days constitute a week at our academy."

Me: "Holly, now that I have beaten up daycare and extended day financially, I would like to explain to you what we do at our academy. We send a professional transportation company to pick up Sandy and Brett at Spring Lake and bring them to our academy. We check them in as they get off the bus right in front of our school for safety, and to make sure they are settled down before they even walk through our doors. It is a lot easier to control children if they are never allowed to get out of control in the first place."

Me: "The children change into their uniform, break out their snack from home or they can get a snack or drink for \$1.00 each from us (usually kids get something to eat and drink for \$2.00) and then they go into the snack area and eat. When they are done, we make sure they are hydrated and go to the restroom before class, and then they can go into the main room and play physical games to warm up for class at 4pm until the rest of the students arrive from their schools."

"Here at my school, they can play basketball in one room, dodgeball in another room, four square in another room and play quiet games like chess, checkers, cards, cars, read, draw, color or do their homework before or after class, if you wish."

**We are not a daycare and we cannot help them with their homework,** but there definitely is a time and place to get some of it done, if that is your wish.”

Me: “We line up for class and bow in at 4:00 and divide our classes into four rooms, according to age and rank, with their own teachers. We teach traditional Japanese Karate and as such, we teach discipline, structure, exercise, manners, respect for other students, teachers and themselves, but most importantly, we teach a positive mental attitude. Self-esteem through earning belt ranks is found nowhere else but in the martial arts. Your children may not know what self-esteem is, but when they are here for a minimum of two to three months, five days per week, they will be earning their yellow belt and feel like a million dollars and you will be here to see what a great job they have done! Does that sound interesting to you?”

Prospect: “Yes!! How much does it cost?”

Me: Just \$79 per week for Sandy and a 10% discount for Brett for a total of only \$148 per week! Can I set up an appointment this afternoon, so you can bring the kids by and take a look at our academy?”

Prospect: “Yes, I will be there after I pick them up from school on my way home from work, around 5:30 p.m.

Me: Great, “I can’t wait to meet you and the kids! Do you know how to get here? Where are you coming from?”

I give directions, make sure I have both her work and home numbers and make a solid appointment.

Holly now only has to see my school, have the kids meet me and/or their teacher, and fill out some paperwork that gives her responsibilities on notifying the school that we will be picking up her children on Monday and the transportation company's number to call in case her kids are out for any reason.

This is the easiest sale you will ever make and it can be adapted to a semester term membership or even a school year membership including summer camp, with some fine-tuning on your presentation.

If the new prospect is having difficulty coming up with the first week's payment of \$148, plus two registration fees of \$50 (or \$100) for a total of \$248, I will let them pay the tuition and then pay out the registration fees over the next pay period.

However, I will not give out any uniforms until the fees have been paid. If the new parent says another parent of one of your students referred them, make sure that you make note of it and give the referring parent a free week for the referral and a big thank you!

In tough economic times, to clinch a new membership, you can waive a registration fee or fees if you need to in order to get a new student or two to join.

You need to record a new voicemail message that lets the public know that you offer the MATA After-School program. My voicemail message changes throughout the year depending if it is back-to-school time, summer camp time or if we are offering any special offers that may be advertised.

Your message may go something like this: "Hello. You have reached Altamonte American Karate Academy, where we specialize in after school

martial arts with free transportation provided, a constructive alternative to daycare, extended day, or babysitting. In the evenings, we offer traditional Japanese Karate classes for men, women, and children. We also offer weapons training and Tai Ho Jitsu classes or real self-defense. Please leave your name and number and someone will get back to you.. Thank you for calling!"

I also leave my web site for them to look at as well

## **Chapter Review**

1. Your objective is to get an appointment with a full name of the parent and the name(s) of the children, the school they attend, how they heard of you and two phone numbers if possible. (Caller ID helps here.)
2. If they heard about you from the phone book, immediately inquire what school their child attends. The phone book covers a wide area and you may go on and on about your program and waste everyone's time if they are outside of your area.
3. If the prospect was referred to you by one of your parents, make sure to get their name and see that they get a free week for the referral.
4. When you have determined that the prospect is in your area, discuss features and benefits of your program in full before you give out the weekly price, but always give out the weekly price.
5. Inquire if their child is currently in daycare, extended day after school, or babysitting, or if they are not, are they going back to work and looking for a constructive alternative to these programs.



6. If they do not need the after school program, switch gears and talk about your evening children's traditional program.

7. Make sure that your voicemail mentions your new MATA After-School program.

# **CHAPTER THIRTEEN**

## **Payment Procedures**

At enrollment, we educate all of our new clients about our policies and payment procedures in our student agreement paperwork, which is included with this program.

We have new clients give us their credit card at point of enrollment to guarantee payment and also give us authorization to charge their card weekly. Payments are due on Friday with credit card authorization to automatically charge for the following week.

For all clients who have not given us their credit card for automatic charge on Friday, they must pay on Thursday. If they haven't paid on Thursday, there will be a \$5 late fee due with payment on Friday.

Sometimes the parent, who has given authorization at point of enrollment, will have someone else pick up their child. This person will probably not be paying you. You can call the parents that evening and have them come down and bring the payment or remind them that payment will be due the next day, Friday, with a \$5 late fee.

If the child does not come the next day, for any reason, or someone else picks up the child without paying, inform the parent by phone that unless payment is made over the weekend (we have them slip it under the door when this happens), you will not be picking up their child on Monday.

My office manager charges all of the credit cards on Friday morning when it is quiet and before the children start arriving in the afternoon. Just use billing software to where you can tap weekly for your clients. The other

students we collect from on Thursday evening.

You can set up your MATA After-School program on a school semester contract and collect monthly by credit card at your school or outsource to a billing company to collect for you. You may also set up your MATA After-School program on a yearly basis and collect monthly. All of these methods work, however, your competition is daycares, and they usually charge weekly, so therefore, I feel you will be most successful doing the same. It is the easiest sale you will ever make.

I still collect weekly and have been doing so for 26 years, as that is our market. I realize not everyone has a large staff, nor has a full-time office manager to perform collections, so you may wish to outsource. I also know that you are not going to start with 175 kids in your MATA After-School program, so you may learn how to do it yourself as you grow. At least you have choices!

## **Chapter Review**

1. Payment procedure and is given a copy of same.
2. Payments are authorized to be automatically charged on Friday from the credit card given at point of enrollment.
3. If they did not give us a credit card to charge, they are a Thursday pay. If they do not pay on Thursday, there will be a \$5 late fee assessed on Friday.
4. If they do not pay on Friday or over the weekend with the late fee, there will be no pick up on Monday.

# **CHAPTER FOURTEEN**

## **ADD/ADHD**

If you haven't taught children before, or even if you have, be aware that there are many children with problems for one reason or another. This is where we step in with our MATA After-School program. Many parents, if given the opportunity, would like their children involved in something more beneficial than just daycare. Daycare's claim to fame is to watch kids play and give back a safe, live child, so our program is a boon to parents.

I have had many parents come to me and my teachers and give a heartfelt thanks for what we have done for their child's self-esteem.

A certain portion of your clientele will possess an organic disorder called ADD (attention deficit disorder) or ADHD (attention deficit hyper-activity disorder). There is so much information out there these days on these disorders that affect so many children and their ability to listen and learn.

I often refer parents to a book entitled "The Strong Willed Child", by Dr. James Dobson, and tell them to specifically read Chapter Six on hyperactivity. You need to be professional and careful when speaking to parents about their children.

I always ask at enrollment if there are any medications their child takes or that I need to be aware of or administer for them. I always observe the behavior of the new child seated across from me at my desk as I speak to the new parent and see if he/she can sit still and not interrupt and not fiddle with things on my desk.

I may ask parents what kind of grades their children get in school and how

they do in reading and comprehension skills and behavior. All parents think that their children are special, and they are, but this may blind them to certain facts that they either are not aware of or do not want to deal with.

If the parent is cooperative and tells me they have noticed problems in these areas, I may ask them if they have ever had an evaluation by their pediatrician or if they have ever seen a specialist in this area. I may tell them that I have noticed many other children exhibiting the same behavior, and their parents had sought professional help with great results.

There are evaluation charts such as the “Vanderbilt Evaluation Scale” and the “Connors Revised Evaluation Scale,” to name a couple. These charts are sent to the elementary school teacher and sometimes to a child’s after school program to evaluate the child’s behavior. I also tell them that I am not a doctor, nor am I diagnosing their child, however, I will not be able to teach them if they cannot pay attention and learn.

In my opinion, it is better to ask a parent to take their child elsewhere if they are disruptive on your bus, in class, and during downtime, if they are not willing to at least seek professional help with a specialist.

## **Chapter Review**

1. Martial arts are not a cure for ADD/ADHD. You cannot “burn off” excess energy; you will only have a tired, hyperactive child who cannot focus.
2. No parent ever wants to discover that something may be wrong with their child or that he or she may have a learning disability.
3. Always approach parents professionally and delicately when broaching this subject.

4. If a child is risking their life or the lives of others by being active on the bus to your school, you have to have the conversation with the parent, period.

5. According to medical science, changing diet by eating organic foods with no food preservatives, deleting sugar, caffeine, chocolate, using bio-feedback, just counseling alone, using so-called “natural methods” from the health food store, didn’t show “any significant difference in behavior whatsoever.”

6. An evaluation by an ADD/ADHD specialist (usually not the pediatrician), is the only way to go and it will most likely result in a prescription for one of the many proven medications now on the market.

7. Ask to see the report card of the child and not only check the grades, but how many check marks there are under behavior. If the child is acting up in your class, the time before and after class and on the bus, it is sure to be the same at school and, therefore, you will not be the only one telling the parent there is a problem.

8. If a parent does not want to try to seek professional help or if they do and are resistant to medication, it will be best to ask them to leave your school before they cause you to lose children who behave.

9. Education of the parent is the key to success in saving a student and saving your sanity!

10. Remember, we are a mecca for hyperactive children who need structure and discipline. You cannot be with a child every minute of every hour of every day; it will take professional help and medication to help

these children learn the lessons taught at their school and at your school.

11. Keep educational materials on this subject available in your office to give to parents to help you educate them.

# **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

## **Moneymakers and Incentives**

There are many ways to earn extra income within your school, and I have probably done them all at one time or another. I simply choose not to do some of them now, since it would require us to work Saturdays.

This does not mean that you shouldn't necessarily do things this way at your school. I don't have birthday parties any more. I don't go with my tournament team 18 Saturdays each year. I've been there, seen it, and have done it! I still get my students ready who want to compete and then I tell them how to get there and ask them to give me the results so I can praise them in class.

I don't do the Adopt-A-Road program anymore on Saturdays with a group of parents and students picking up trash and then getting donuts and drinks afterward. This wasn't a moneymaker, but an event that involved the school and, therefore, a retention tool as well as a character development program. It was great advertising, too, since the county put up signs on both ends of the road where we picked up litter for more than five years and the signs are still there. We still have canned food drives right here at the school and we get on the news for about 30-seconds every year. The students brought in one ton of canned food last year! We go to a drop-off area during regular school hours and we still don't have to give up our weekends.

We have many incentives for praise, such as receiving a large red star that can be ironed on the lapel of the student's uniform for chores completed at home over a one-month period. I send home an award sheet to be monitored and filled out by the parents. This allows the parents to be



involved in our character development program with their children and our school.

If the student has completed enough tasks on a regular basis over a period of a month, the parent turns in the paperwork, checked off and signed, and we reward their child in front of the whole school for a job well done.

When students are doing well in school and are on the honor roll, we give them an academic achievement patch to go on their sleeve in front of the whole school and take their picture for our Wall of Fame to honor their academic achievement. We reward our top students who listen, learn, don't cause trouble, and who have been with us to at least brown belt (at least two years) with a leadership team patch and/or top student patch to put on their uniform in front of the whole student body.

These leadership team students not only are asked to help the teachers, they are our future teachers! These incentives are free, and I am glad to honor my students any way I can for earned achievement.

## **Chapter Review**

1. Host birthday parties at your school if you are open on weekends.
2. "Adopt-A-Road" and then you can meet on the weekend with some parents and students and pick up trash and even get your name on a sign at either end of the road you adopt.
3. Promote a canned food drive once a year around Thanksgiving.
4. A Christmas party for everyone at a local restaurant is a good way to recognize students and parents by giving out awards as a retention tool.

5. Ninja Nites every six weeks are a great money maker and retention tool on a Friday evening from 6:30pm to midnight, or a lock-in all night, and no fee is charged. We sell the parent a wrist band for \$25 that enables the holder to get food and drinks for the evening. Also, it's a good idea to have a karate demo that evening to keep theme about karate and not care and to get new students from the guests.

6. You can start a "Kids Helping Kids" program where all your students bring in old movies they don't necessarily need and donate them to a local children's hospital. You can even take up a collection to go along with this to buy toys or videos for the kids while they are receiving chemotherapy.

7. Make sure that you have plenty of snacks and drinks for sale. Buy wholesale at Costco or Sam's Club and sell retail.

8. Many schools do Break-A-Thons to generate income for different charities which will build character development for your students, help other children and get your name in the paper for advertising.

9. Give out Academic Achievement patches in front of the whole school for good grades in school with no negative check marks for behavior.

10. Take pictures of your children who make the Honor Roll at school and place their picture on the wall for everyone to see, especially on a tour with a new prospect.

11. You can start a tournament team with your after school children and either charge extra for the extra training or merely use it as a retention tool for the children. This means that you give up your Saturdays for tournaments!

12. You can take pictures of your students who can perform a full split and then have a “split club” on the wall with pictures of these students.

# CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## Ninja Nites

NOTE: Make sure to contact your insurance agent to let them know that you are hosting Ninja Nite sleepovers.

I have Ninja Nite about every six weeks, with a two-week lead-time to advertise. **DO NOT advertise** this type of activity to the open public especially on Facebook. You aren't sure who you will get and DCF can see this, too. Only invite guests of your members and do all this advertising in house. **Only invite guests of your members** and do all this advertising in house.

I only charge \$25, with \$5 off for siblings. NOTE: You can only charge for food and drink. You can't charge for the event. Give everyone a wrist band for \$25 that entitles the bearer to unlimited food and drinks (pizza and sodas, etc.).

A Ninja Nite like this is not only loads of fun, gives parents an evening out on the town without their children, and brings in new students through guests, but it is also a great moneymaker.

I often gross more than \$2,000 with a net of around \$1,200 and I don't even come in anymore, since my staff is trained and does it all! Of course, I pay them extra, even if they are on salary.

In short, I have become streamlined and efficient at being profitable with MATA After-School as my base.

How to Market Your Event:

- ◆ Advertise 2 weeks in advance
- ◆ Announce in class
- ◆ Hang poster
- ◆ Print and distribute flyers
- ◆ Post it on your Facebook page
- ◆ You may want to check out [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) to get online registrations, though I have never used it.

The kids come in the regular clothes and if some are going to perform a demonstration, they will bring their uniform. I invite ages 5 to 12. Make sure you get the names and numbers, including cell phones or any other number that would be relevant, of all the parents and where they are going to be that night.

Make sure you make two separate lists, with the guests next to their sponsors. You will be giving these guests a free, one-week pass in the morning and calling them back on Monday to invite them.

If you call the guests and ask if they had fun at Ninja Nite and they didn't, you are going to have a hard time getting them back in. You can even run a contest for awarding the student who brings the most guests, with prizes for first, second, and third, and so on.

End registration on Wednesday, so you know how much food and drink to purchase. We also have everyone sign a waiver of liability, especially the unknown guests. We will give the waivers to our students to take to their guests to bring in or they can fill them out when they come in on Saturday night. The reason you do everything in advance should be obvious. You need to know how many staff to schedule and an idea of how much pizza, drinks, cups, balloons, etc. to buy.

## **Ninja Nites Activities**

We always start with the sound system blasting to add excitement as the kids come through the door and get some games going, like basketball or jump the pads, etc., until there are enough kids to have a balloon kick.

We put numbers in the balloons that correlate to door prizes. We have everyone perform front kicks to the end of the school and if they are performing proper technique in their kicks, the balloon will move forward instead of upward.

They sit on their balloons to pop them and get their numbers; then they get their prizes. We use an air compressor to blow up the balloons.

When most of the kids have arrived with their guests, you can order pizza. We get the games going in the different rooms like in after school and summer camp or we'll have one big relay race going with all the kids until pizza arrives.

We then line them up against the back wall and call up ten at a time to have pizza and drinks. I use cups since the kids waste so much, and they can have refills if they want. I always order extra for the staff too. After pizza, we watch a movie, so they don't get sick.

Right after the movie you need to have a bathroom break and then you can set up for the next event.

This is when we let our students shine in front of their guests. We set up for a martial arts demo that may have board breaking, cement breaking, judo flips, jiu jitsu self-defense, weapons, and kata.

We pick the students who can do each task the best and especially the

students who brought guests, so they can be a star! They get cheers and ovations from everyone, and their guests think they are great and want to learn how to do what their friends do. Well, we will help them to do that, because we give them a free week in our school!

The instructors now show some top-notch skills and thoroughly wow the large group of children, especially when we do breaking with fire or a kata with weapons that glow in the dark.

After the demo, we set up for the main event of the night, the Ninja Trail! We put all of the children in the lighted lobby and pro shop area.

Then behind closed doors we set up the actual obstacle course where the kids will wander through in the dark. We use the free-standing heavy bags, body shields and other pads to create an obstacle course. At the end of the obstacle course is a chair with a soft, foam ball that has been painted with day-glow paint with a black light hooked up to the chair that makes the Ninja Gem glow in the dark.

You can get the black light bulb and holder, which is the same light holder you use under a car hood with a spring-loaded clip, at a home improvement store or an auto supply store.

The object is to get by all of the Ninjas (your instructors), through the obstacle course to steal the Ninja Gem and then get back to the lobby. If they make it, they get to be a Ninja!

It helps to be young and have an imagination. We play haunted house music on the stereo. If the younger kids don't want to go into this scary room, you can either carry them in on your shoulders and fend off the Ninjas and let them get the gem, or let them go in with a friend or two, or

keep them out all together.

The older kids, who might hurt your instructors in the dark, can be helpers. They can open and close the doors for the kids, get the next kids ready to go in and help keep the kids under control in the waiting area. They can also help hand out pizza, clean up, or any other help you may need that makes them feel part of the team.

After the Ninja Trail, we turn the lights back on in the main room, clear away the obstacle course, and put all of the children along the back wall of the dojo. Next, we bring out the sleeping pillows that were stowed away upon arrival in the locker rooms and have small groups of children come up and get their own pillow and go back and sit down until we are ready to start the pillow fight.

We have four rooms with four rings. We have the 5 and 6-year-olds in one ring, the 7 and 8-year-olds in another, 9 and 10 in another and the 11 and 12-year-olds in the last. We then have supervised pillow fights for two minutes at a stretch.

This is fun, takes up time and wears the little guys out after being so excited all night. We then have a supervised main event for about five minutes at the end so that they are all worn out.

### **Follow Up**

On Monday, call all of your guests and invite them to take a free week of evening classes, also ask if they go to daycare, extended day at school, or babysitting after school.

You should get new members every time you hold a Ninja Nite, as well as make quick cash and entertain your existing students. Once you hold a



large Ninja Nite, you will understand why we only have one every six weeks or so, because they take a toll on the staff.

Most of my staff go home around midnight when the children bed down to watch a movie. I have at least two adults (one male and one female) on the clock at all times. I keep at least one employee at the front desk and one on the floor.

We use the walkie-talkies for communication, which we also use in the after school and summer camp program to dismiss children from the back quiet room to the parents picking them up in the lobby.

You may wish to operate until 11:00 or 12:00 on a Friday or Saturday night. We do it nowadays on Friday evening as we are not open on the weekends for anything.

Your objectives are an instant income generator, fun retention tool, new member leads, and parent's night out! Parents love to go out once in awhile and have fun while their children are safe and having fun inexpensively.

You can charge what your area can stand, but the idea is to keep the cost down and the amount of students and guests up!

If you have a large building or warehouse, you can operate a Ninja Nite like I now do. I rent a large Jump Around with a slide or two regular Jump Arouns. We crank up the music and let the kids go wild inside a padded cell, so to speak!

You want a party atmosphere and lots of energy and fun. Remember, if you wear the little rascals out with the Jump Around, relay races and a pillow fight, you may get some sleep!

## **Chapter Review**

1. Have Ninja Nites or Mom's Night Out on a regular basis as a retention tool, guest referral basis, and money maker.
2. Advertise at least two weeks out inside and outside of your school with flyers and posters.
3. You can allow early pick up on the same night if that is the parent's wish.
4. Have two separate lists for members and their guests.
5. Call guests on Monday to inquire how much they enjoyed the Ninja Nite and invite them to be a guest of evening classes for a week or if they need something for after school instead of daycare.
6. Make everyone sign a waiver of liability and leave home emergency number/ cell phone numbers.
7. Have everyone pre-pay for their food and drink writband so you have a good idea of how many staff to have on hand, how much pizza to order (call ahead to have the pizza place have the pies ready), how many drinks and cups to have on hand, etc.
8. Have your night already pre-structured regarding when to eat, when and what games to play, when and what movie you will watch, etc.
9. Have any and all demo materials on hand, as well as games and balloons if you are going to use them.
10. Walkie-talkies are a good idea to have on hand for instructors in the

front of your school to speak with staff in the back of the school.

11. Make sure every guest gets a brochure in the morning when they leave and make sure that if anyone joins, the referring member gets a free week of after school or an evening traditional member gets a free month added on to their existing membership.

# **CHAPTER SEVENTEEN**

## **Snacks**

I didn't realize the financial potential of selling snacks until I had the vendors take out their drink and snack machines. I purchased a \$200 used refrigerator five years ago, which is still going strong, and I buy prepackaged bulk snacks and drinks at Sam's Club, Costco or the equivalent.

I pay an average of eleven cents for each snack that I then sell for \$1.00. We make a lot of extra income selling snacks each day, five days per week. We also sell snacks at Ninja Nites, in-school tournaments, and even at testing. I can almost pay my rent from snack sales alone!

Remember that, as martial artists, we should be setting a good example for our students, especially concerning health and nutrition. Try to purchase healthier snacks than candy, chips, and soda. Read the labels and shop accordingly.

Although a good choice, selling fresh fruit may not be allowed due to your local health department regulations concerning food sales that aren't prepackaged. Also be aware of any food allergies that students may have, especially those allergic to nuts. Frozen fruit or yogurt pops could be an anticipated special treat one day a week during summer camp or after belt testing. Profitable and nutritious snacks will keep everyone happy at snack time.

### **Chapter Review**

1. Buy wholesale snacks in bulk at Costco or Sam's Club and sell retail.

2. Try to sell the healthiest snacks you can get, such as apple sauce, oatmeal cookies, granola bars, water, juices, etc.
3. Be careful about selling produce, as your area may need a license for sale of produce.

# **CHAPTER EIGHTEEN**

## **In-School Tournaments**

I used to hold in-school tournaments once or twice a year. I used to promote a major central Florida tournament, so I definitely knew how to do a small, in-house event.

Tournaments, in general, can be a good thing. Students who attend and compete regularly in tournaments rise to a new standard of proficiency. Getting a group of 34 to go around the state and keep them all at top-notch proficiency is quite an undertaking. Out of this 34, 23 became state champions, including my wife and I on more than one occasion.

We developed such a large, lucrative MATA After-School program that we only have a total of 12 classes per week with no weekends! Our tournament days are over here at the school and we don't go on the circuit anymore as we have already been there, done that! I have also sold my second school to my then partner as it is so much easier to do things my way with less schools, no tournaments, no weekends.

Maybe if you get a large successful MATA After-School program, you can cut back your work schedule, too!

Tournaments are a great way to measure your martial arts skills on the open circuit and to see just how good you are. However, tournament parents can be a nightmare, obsessed with their children winning and/or the perception that you are working with other students more than theirs and so on.

Outside tournaments can be expensive and you will probably be there all

day long, sometimes into the evening. Furthermore, there may be 10, 20, even 30 or more in one division and your students may have a harder time placing and winning anything for all their hard work.

Since the MATA After-School program affords the opportunity to work with your students so much more, I have had as many as four students in the same division where there were as many as 30 students and my students swept first through fourth. What about all the other little kids who didn't win?

When you have an in-school tournament, you still train for competition and raise your skill level, while learning how to win and how to lose gracefully, but you will earn a significant income for your time and work.

You can control many factors that will make for an enjoyable experience for all of your students and parents. Our doors open at 11:00 a.m. for late registrations and ring assignments. I start my tournaments at noon on a Saturday and finish and get out of the school by 3:00 p.m.

I have my second school bring over all of their competitors to have a real competition and my partner, who is the principal owner of this school, gets to keep all the monies that his school generates. I do not charge a spectator fee and I only charge \$20 for all events (weapons, forms, and sparring.)

We have someone at the front lobby selling snacks and drinks grossing an extra \$500 or so, and we average around 100 competitors, with about 300 adults.

Thank goodness my main school is 7,000 square feet with 4,300 on the floor to hold this type of event, along with large Ninja Nites and a very large MATA After-School program in general. I planned it that way when I

selected the location.

Since the tournament is held at my school, I can include as many divisions as I want, so there are only a few competitors in each division, thus giving all the children better odds to be in the top four places.

I still give awards to all competitors and even have six grand champion trophies that I award for top fighter/weapons for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students.

Everyone gets a medal with gold, silver, and bronze for the top four. I usually gross about \$2,500 for a few hours of work, and the kids and parents have a great time, which helps as a retention tool. This is the real reason I have this event once or twice per year.

This is a good time to check out your talent for the open circuit as well. It is a good idea to have a little demo for the students and especially the parents, who may have never seen you perform weapons, kata, self-defense, and breaking.

I always pay the staff bonuses for coming in and working these extracurricular events. Your average MATA After-School parent won't care how many titles you have won, what your titles are, how many boards you can break, but rather how personable you are and how you can satisfy his/her after school needs in your clean school.

No one ever joined my school to go to tournaments, whether it was after school kids, evening children or adults, so be careful you don't create a monster. With all that said, I still am proud of my years competing.

## **Chapter Review**



1. If you are open on Saturdays, in-school tournaments can be a great moneymaker, retention tool, and a way to scout potential tournament competitors for the open circuit.
2. This is supposed to be a fun in-house event, so be wary of creating a monster with tournament parents (little league parents), to whom winning is everything.
3. Ribbons and medals can be purchased for as little as \$1.10; make sure that everyone leaves with a ribbon, medal, plaque, or trophy.
4. Have your students bring guests to watch them compete and make sure that all guests sign in. You will give them your brochure, offer a free week, and hopefully, get a new member.
5. Put on an exciting demo with yourself and teachers with empty hand forms, weapons, and breaking and self defense; this is your time to wow the parents and guests.

# **CHAPTER NINETEEN**

## **Pro Shop Sales**

Our pro shop is located between the lobby and main floor, where everyone coming into the school has to walk through. We have everything for sale that sells well, including items that market our school. We have T-shirts, polo shirts, license plates, uniforms, bags, pads, weapons, bumper stickers (put one free in all new member packets), jackets, videos of all our testing requirements at each level, and more.

You need to have a bright area where you can display your goods for sale. I always have a Christmas sale, where I move everything into my lobby at least six weeks before we close for Christmas break, and put a few of everything on a table with Tivoli lights and Christmas garnish for 20% off. Advertise your sale in your school newspaper and let all of your parents know what great gifts all of these items will make for the holidays!

If you have different level traditional programs, you can also set up your pro shop to help sell them. I know this works well, having worked in the health club business before. We had bronze, silver, and gold level memberships, with different features and benefits for each level.

You can put different packages together for each level of membership in your school as well, with uniforms, equipment and goodies to coincide with each program you offer. These packages can work as an upgrade tool to the different level programs you offer.

# **CHAPTER TWENTY**

## **Testing Fees and Procedures**

This is our largest moneymaker by far, earning my school approximately \$30,000 annually (this also includes sales of pads to all new Yellow Belts).

I inform all new members at enrollment, verbally and in writing, that these fees will be charged and when. The “What New Members Can Expect” form explains all of this. Some schools include testing fees with the tuition, however, you cannot raise the rates for your MATA After-School program higher because your competition is daycare and your rates have to be in line with your area’s daycares.

I do not test anyone before they are ready; I do not run a belt mill and neither should you. I have a minimum amount of time between belt testing and attendance requirements and they have to know and perform the curriculum. It is a good idea to have a week of classes in one area of your school during regular class time where you personally look at each and every student eligible for testing.

Weed out, and let down gracefully, the students who will not be able to do the curriculum on test day. You do not want to have children crying on the floor in front of everyone, because they couldn’t do the material.

It is a lot easier to have a test week prior to actual testing, which is a graduation ceremony at my school where they will all receive their belts and certificates after each group performs some of the material I ask of them. They have to know all the material, since they do not specifically know what I will ask them to do. However, I will not ask them to perform something unless I know that they can do it well. I make my students shine

at testing!

If you cannot get a student ready in time, let them know that you will work with them and they should be able to test next month. Tell them individually so they won't feel so bad.

If a parent has trouble paying a test fee, my office works it out for them with payments or lets them wait another month to test. All of my yellow belt (first colored belt) students will be required to buy all the sparring gear as well when they test.

My office manager has them all pay in advance and measures the new yellow belts a week before they test for their sparring gear and asks their color of choice. I will not test someone if the parent cannot afford it or if there are discipline problems at home and Mom wants me to hold off. It is a privilege and an honor to test and move forward with one's training.

### **Testing Fees**

|  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| \$45 — 3 months                              | Yellow belt, Orange      |
| \$45 — 3 months                              | Orange/black Stripe Blue |
| \$45 — 3 months                              | Green                    |
| \$75 — 4 months                              | Purple                   |
| \$95 — 6 months                              | Brown (3 black Stripes)  |
| \$95 — 9 months                              | Brown (2 black Stripes)  |
| \$95 — 12 months                             | Brown (No black Stripes) |
| \$100  | 1st Degree Black Belt*   |
| \$100  | 2nd Degree Black Belt    |
| \$100  | 3rd Degree Black Belt    |
| *Junior Black Belt for under 16 years of age |                          |

### **Chapter Review**

1. Make sure that all adult students and parents of students know at the point of enrollment about your test fees. Make sure they get a “What New Members Can Expect” sheet that details all your fees for testing and pads.
2. You should have a published curriculum of everything that you will be teaching and a minimum amount of time between belts and the fees listed.
3. Children, who start at five years of age, will possibly take longer to reach the same level than an older student takes. Make sure that the parents know this and aren’t looking to just buy belts.
4. Make sure that you pre-test all students so they will look great at their testing ceremony. You can test right in your regular class time, like me, if you are not open on weekends.
5. Make sure that everyone has pre-paid for testing. If the parent cannot afford to test, make arrangements, so as not to hold back their child, if you can. If a parent does not want them to test because of poor behavior at home and/or at school, you have to honor their decision at least once. I have tested and promoted some students for free because of financial difficulty or parents just not willing to spend the money, as they didn’t think it was important!
6. Testing and promotion is an honor and a privilege; I will not test anyone who does not know the material and cannot perform up to my standards.
7. In my style, I don’t take anyone under 5 years of age. I don’t water down my style to teach children. I will not put a Sho Dan on anyone under 16 years of age. It usually takes close to 5 years for a small child to reach Sho Dan Ho (junior black belt) and they will stay at that level until they reach 16. It will take about 4 years for an adult to reach Sho Dan level.



# **CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE**

## **Seminars**

In-school seminars, with guest teachers, are not only moneymakers, but also another way to keep interest up and learn something new and different.

Everyone in my school pays \$25 for in-school events, since they are members of my organization. When I have one of these events open to the public, the public will pay more than my members. This shows value in belonging to my organization and justifies the yearly dues of \$20 that each of my members pay. When I have an open event, I post flyers at the local martial arts store and may personally call a few school owners asking them to come, if they want to participate.

Since my school is not open on weekends, since the year 2000, I rarely have seminars anymore. If I do hold a seminar, it will be a learning experience for my students and a moneymaker.

I do host the head of my system Motobu-Ha Shito-Ryu Karate-Do, Soke Kozo Kuniba, from Osaka, Japan, at least once per year. It is not only a learning experience, but a true honor to be able to not only meet the hereditary founder of my Ryu, but to also train with him! The fees for his visit are substantially higher to my students.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

## Selling Videos

Videos are another source of extra income and is a very helpful tool for the students, as well as the parents who wish to help their children learn, but don't know what we are teaching precisely. I publish a small manual that all new students receive at enrollment, which has the entire curriculum of our style, history, and testing requirements for each belt level.

I have made a corresponding DVD of each testing level, such as Yellow Belt, Orange Belt, etc., and sell these DVD's after each testing to help the student study at home; what a concept, work at home!

We video me performing the required kata from the front and the side slowly and then from the front at full power. Then I show all the bunkai or fighting application of each move in each kata. It has been said that kata without bunkai is like a treasure chest without a key. Instructors who teach forms without application are teaching dance, because the martial arts is within the bunkai and point sparring is a sport with rules, time limits, and referees to break it up. Both are important, but the real fighting is contained within the kata.

I know five-year-olds are not going to be able to perform much bunkai, but I want them to learn the technique of foot blades, kick lines, punch lines, stances, focus, power, breathing, and pattern. I will show them the application when I teach them, but I will not require them to know it until they are in the advanced room with me.

I have all aspects that correspond to the test in the book that the new student receives at enrollment and they can go right down the list and see it



taught. Parents constantly ask me how to help their children at home and the video was the answer and a very easy sale for \$19.95! All of their sparring drills, self-defense maneuvers, and kata/application are explained and shown in detail.

Next, we produce a video on just the kata and bunkai from beginner to advanced. Since our style is Motobu-Ha Shito-Ryu Karate, we probably have more kata than all other styles and I cannot make them all required kata for testing. However, I do want my serious students to have access to the entire system. I have four main DVD's containing just the kata that sell for \$39.95 each.

Since we also teach kobudo (ancient weapons), we also produce DVD's for each weapon; bo, tonfa, sai, nunchaku and kama with bunkai, for sale at \$19.95. Other than all the years of study and the hours of work to put the videos together, the cost is only about \$4 each, leaving a great profit margin. In my opinion, you need to have monies coming in from all directions all the time. Tuition, pro shop sales, snacks, videos, special events, and so on add up to a great net.

## **Chapter Review**

1. DVD's of your testing requirements for sale are another great source of income.
2. You can make DVD's of your weapons program, too, if you have one.
3. You can also make a DVD of all your forms and sell them separately in a series.

# **CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE**

## **Weapons Training**

We do offer traditional Okinawan weapons training (Kobudo) at my school. It is another means of retention, as well as offering another whole martial art to them. We teach Bo, Tonfa, Sai, Nunchaku, and Kama to our students. They buy their own weapons from us and pay test fees, too. If they are a Brown Belt in Karate, they would start as a White Belt in weapons training.

Weapons are an extension of their Karate, based on good stances, blocks, strikes, and focus. For my children, it is a privilege that has to be earned and is only offered to students once they have attained their second belt level, exhibit good behavior at my school, in their school, and at home.

Children and adults pay an extra \$25 per month, in addition to their regular program, and no one can take just weapons in my school. My weapons' classes are only offered on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00p.m. until 7:00 p.m. They are attended by both after school students and evening traditional children and adults.

I do not offer weapons class with my MATA After-School program, as I have way too many students to do so and it would not be safe. We use real weapons in a controlled atmosphere in the evening.

After school students have to leave and come back to attend these classes. It is illegal to have children with you from 3:00 in the afternoon until 7:00 o'clock in the evening in many states, according to daycare exemption codes.

Furthermore, it is just too long for a child to be at our school; it is not fair to

the child. This would also go for those who have Black Belt Clubs with their after school students who have them stay over for a special class in the evening.

In Florida, per code, students can be with you only 4 hours per day if you operate an open access facility as we do. They can be with you all day for in-service days, spring break and winter break but they could not stay on a regular school day from 2:30 to 7:00 for instance on weapons days. We also are not permitted to have any field trips during the calendar school year for spring break, winter break or any in-service day; summer camp is exempt and we do have field trips.

### **Chapter Review**

1. Weapons training is a privilege for my students to study and it has to be earned.
2. We only offer weapons training in the evening, as it can be unsafe in the after school or summer camp program if you have large numbers of students as I do.
3. I charge extra for weapons training as well as test fees.
4. It is illegal to have students with you for too many hours in many states, according to daycare code exemptions.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

## Games

Games will keep your MATA After-School program interesting before and after class, as well as during summer camp. When you start teaching the same students five days per week, every week, month after month, and year after year, you will learn a lot of different games.

Many of your games can be martial arts-related, while others may not be specifically related to a particular martial arts drill. All games will have the hidden value of learning how to win and lose gracefully and take turns. They may learn balancing skills, how to be patient by waiting their turn, power, focus, and so on.

Other games are for the sheer entertainment value for the most part. If children are not having fun in your school, then you are going to have a difficult time disguising repetition of curriculum and keeping them interested, especially if they attend for a few years.

Here are a few to get you started. Remember, the after-school program is a martial arts program and the games before class are used to warm up our students like basketball, dodge ball and four-square for about 15 to 20 minutes before class begins at 4:00 p.m. Most of our games are for summer camp, spring break, winter break and all day in-service days.

### Games and Activities

#### Clash

**Materials needed:** Two body shields.

Make a ring about 20'x20.' Put two kids about the same size in the ring.

**Rules:** Push your opponent down or outside the ring to earn a point.

**Objective:** To get three points. This is a good physical game and expends a lot of energy.

## Swords

**Materials needed:** Two pool noodles.

Make a common area (usually 20'x20') and place two children about the same size in it, each with a pool noodle.

**Rules:** Try to lightly hit your opponent with the noodle in whatever target areas you permit (no face contact).

One point is scored every time a player strikes the opponent.

**Objective:** To get three points.

**Option:** Use body shields at the same time for blocking.

## Four Corners

Make a common area (usually 20'x20') and name each corner one through four.

**Rules:** One player stands in the middle with eyes shut and counts out loud to ten while the other players run around and choose a corner to stand in. After the counter gets to ten and the eyes are still closed, he/she must call out a corner one through four.

The children who are in that corner are out.

The game continues until only one remains.

**Objective:** To be the last one standing. That child is the counter for the next game.

## Hot Potato

**Materials needed:** Sound system and a small ball.

**Rules:** Have the children sit down in a circle and then turn on the music.

Have the children start passing the ball quickly! Whoever is holding the ball when music stops is out.

**Objective:** To be the last one in.

## **Jump the Pads**

**Materials needed:** Body shields (about 6 to 10) and a tumbling mat to land on.

**Rules:** Start with 3 pads stacked one on top of the other. Each student is to jump over the pads without knocking them down. If they knock a pad down, they are out. Add another pad after all the children have jumped that level of pads. They can do flips, flying kicks, or whatever they want to do to clear the height. Make sure you have enough padding in the mat and an instructor(s) at the clearance spot to protect the children.

**Objective:** To be the one to jump over the most pads.

## **Tug of War**

**Materials needed:** A belt.

**Rules:** Put a mark in the center of a ring/area and when one child pulls the other child to that mark, that child is out. This can be played with just two children or even groups of children.

**Objective:** To pull the other child over the line.

## **Musical Pads**

**Materials needed:** Body shields and sound system.

**Rules:** Start the music and have the students walk around the pads. When the music stops they must sit on a pad. The one without a pad is out.

**Objective:** To be the last student out.

## **Basketball**

**Materials needed:** Basketball hoop and backboard. Put it on your wall if

you have a facility that will support this or you can get a portable hoop and stand.

**Rules:** Make up different types of games and drills to do with the basketball instead of full-fledged games.

## **Sensei Says**

**Materials needed:** An instructor and an open space.

**Rules:** Same as Simon Says, except you use martial arts moves and commands.

**Objective:** To be the last one in.

## **Obstacle Course**

**Materials needed:** Body shields, bags, other pads, mats, etc.

**Rules:** With the body shields make tunnels and then make a zigzag course with hand pads on the floor. Make up your own rules and time limit to get through.

**Objective:** To be the student who gets through the course without knocking over the tunnel or stepping on the pads with the best time.

## **Dodgeball**

**Materials needed:** A medium size sponge ball that will not hurt the children.

**Rules:** Try to hit students with the ball, below the waist, in a designated area. If a student catches the ball, the student isn't out. If you are hit, you are out.

**Objective:** To be the last one in the game.

Options: Have more than one ball going.

## **Board Games**

These games are played in a quiet area that is used for homework as

well. Chess, checkers, Connect Four®, Uno®, playing cards, coloring books and crayons, and other games are all fine. Remember, the more small pieces you have in a game, the more you can lose. You have to have a check- out/check-in list for these games and make someone in a particular group responsible for returning the games.

## **Chapter Review**

Make sure that you go to a store early and purchase all of your board games, arts and crafts, crayons, etc., early and have them on hand.

1. Games are not just for summer camp, but also for after class for after school while waiting to go home.
2. In some areas, all games have to be martial arts related if you have strict daycare codes that state you can only teach a “sole activity.”
3. Have either a staff member or a team leader responsible each and every day checking games in and out to retain all the pieces.



## **CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE**

### **Daily Operation of MATA After-School**

Our day starts when the kids walk through the door from school. We have to be at the school at least 30-minutes earlier to be certain we are set up for the day. I usually have my chief instructor go by the school earlier to turn down the air conditioner so it will be nice and cool when the kids arrive.

Although we really do not have to be in our uniforms and ready to go until the kids arrive, I often come by the school in the mornings and check the info calls on the voicemail against the caller ID. I do call backs and set up appointments, as well as confirm all other appointments that were already made for that day.

My chief instructor and I go to breakfast and then check the signs and brochures at schools and businesses. Although I could assign this to someone else, I still enjoy keeping personal tabs on how my advertising is doing, and I set an example by getting out there after all these years and putting out signs or refilling racks or getting a new rack into a new location.

We come back to the school and prepare for the day by making sure the school is clean and smells fresh for the evening classes.

As the first bus arrives, we meet the bus outside and watch the children walk to our front door and line up under the overhang in single file. We look at the bus list and determine which school has arrived. We call out the names from that school and the children will respond with, "Here Sir/ Ma'am!" and then go into the school and immediately change into their uniforms in the appropriate locker room.

We use a colored marker to mark over the names of the children who have arrived from a particular school. We also have already used a different colored marker to mark over the names of the children whose parents have called in an absence. We have the parents notify the transportation service if their child is not coming for any reason and our transportation service notifies us with one fax or email, thus eliminating many phone calls to the bus service each day.

If a child has not arrived from a particular school and has not been colored as absent, then we immediately have to go to our enrollment book and call the parent at work and tell them that their child missed the bus and no one called.

After this process, the children stow away their clothes, shoes, and bags neatly, break out a snack from home or come to the front desk and purchase a snack and/or drink from us for \$1.00 each respectively, and go into the snack area and eat.

When they are finished with their snack, we make sure they have a drink, use the restroom and then go play in the main dojo. We have a portable basketball hoop in one room, dodgeball in another room and quiet board games in the forth room.

**We do not help with homework, nor do we tell parents that we will help with homework.**

We have another drink and a restroom break and have all games, homework, and snacks put away before class. Then the students line up by five minutes before 4:00 p.m. when we bow in formal seiza position. This keeps kids still and much easier to control.

We dismiss each group one group at a time. We say, "White belts up and go into your room. Yellow belts up and go into your room," and so on. We use the PVC vertical curtains to divide the rooms very nicely and we teach appropriate curriculum until five minutes before 5:00 p.m. We line up in seiza, bow out, say our dojo morals, and recite all of our manners.

Parents love to hear the kids say, "Yes, Sir! No, Sir! Yes, Ma'am! No, Ma'am! Please! Thank you! Excuse me! I'm sorry! You're welcome! and I will not play on the bus!" Then they are dismissed to change clothes and organized in small groups for pick-up.

During classes, we teach our published curriculum that each student receives at enrollment. We spar on Wednesdays, since it is an early arrival day for the kids and we can go for an hour and a half working on sparring drills, bag/pad/ makiwara work, as well as sparring.

We also spar on Friday afternoons. This not only helps improve their sparring, but keeps all the colored belts occupied while the white belts are learning basics in another area with their own teacher. It is important to assign certain days for sparring so your students will know to bring their sparring gear with them.

I have cubicles assigned with numbers for each student so they may leave their sparring gear here at the school.

I will not let them leave their uniforms in the school because they need to be washed regularly. I sell most students a second uniform, so one is always clean.

If they come unprepared, they will have to write sentences such as, "I will bring my uniform to class," 10 times for under-seven years old, 50 times for

beginners and 100 times for intermediate and advanced students.

They will still have to take class and spar. No one gets out of anything at my school. Parents can pick up as early as 5:00 p.m. and as late as 6:00 p.m., with a grace period of 15 minutes with no late charge.

We charge \$3.00 for every block of 15 minutes after 6:15 for late pick- ups, no exceptions, and no excuses, as explained at enrollment and in the new member packet. Between 5:00 and 6:00, we have the kids go back into the quiet room and play quiet games and do homework, if they choose, until pick up. We use a walkie-talkie from the front desk to this holding area to send the children who are completely changed with their shoes on and ready to go home. We get all 175 kids dressed out and even do collections, if it is Thursday or Friday.

We also have the school cleaned and mopped, including the bathrooms and snack area, all within one hour and we only have 11 parking spaces! I know you can do it!

We get ready for the next class of children in the evening at 6:00 and the adult class at 7:00. Adult classes run until 8:30pm on these nights. We close at 7:00pm on Monday and 6:00pm on Friday because we can.

### **Sample Daily Schedule**

Early Afternoon

- Prepare School ( Heat / A/C, etc.)

3:00

- Students begin to arrive Students change into uniforms
- Snack time
- Games in various rooms Restroom break

4:00

- Class begins

5:00

- Students change into street clothes Parents begin to arrive for pick-up
- Students play games or do homework until pick-up Instructors clean school for evening classes

## **Chapter Review**

1. Be sure to check in early each day and set the heat or air conditioning if needed, so it will be comfortable for your students when they arrive for class.
2. Check your caller ID for info calls and call back, as well as confirm existing daily appointments.
3. The mornings are a good time to service your brochure racks in the businesses and schools. I do all the schools one morning and businesses the next. This is also a good time to check or place your signs, where tolerated, at the schools.
4. Make sure that you have all the call-offs marked on your bus list before you or your transportation service leave in the afternoon for pick up of students.
5. If you use a transportation service or own your own service as I do, make sure that they are in communication with you at your school while they are picking up students at the schools. They are not to leave until all students' whereabouts are accounted for.

6. Have enough staff inside your school to govern your students' behavior. You do not have to yell at out-of-control children if you never let them get out of control. Do not run your MATA After-School program like a daycare.
7. Check the children in at the front door as they arrive.
8. See that they get dressed out immediately and stow away the gear.
9. Ensure that they purchase a snack/drink from you or get out their own and eat.
10. See that your children take a restroom break after snack, so that they won't have to leave during class.
11. Get in touch with your staff for a few minutes before class to make sure that your curriculum is being taught and that students are making progress towards stripes and/or testing. In short, that they are moving forward.
12. All children take class each and every day, no excuses. That is the only reason they are there. If they forgot their uniform, they still take class, but lose play privileges.
13. Class is usually held between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., as this works best for working parents nationwide.
14. Parents may pick up as early as 5:00 p.m. and as late as 6:00 p.m. We give a 15-minute grace period before we instill a late fee.
15. It is a good idea to have a place to store the children's sparring pads, as they will lose them while traveling to and from home and school. Make sure that their cubby is numbered and their pads are replaced after each

and every sparring class. Attach their mouth guards to their headgear to prevent loss, too.

16. Make sure that the children take home their uniform after each class to be cleaned. Sell an extra one or two to keep clean uniforms.

# **CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX**

## **How to Run a Summer Camp**

As I have mentioned, you can run a summer camp without running a transported after school program and vice versa. However, for most school owners, and even health club owners, the summers are dead. At my school in Florida, they are the largest money making months of the year and I routinely average \$65k to \$75k in one location per month!

If you run a MATA After-School program, you can earn a full-time income working part-time; however, the summer is when you work full-time. School dismissing for summer break is one of the two major events that happens every year with the MATA After-School program, and in my opinion, you need to take advantage of it.

Besides not wanting to teach classes all day throughout the year, another reason is because of summer camp. I used to have noon classes during the regular school year and during summer camp. I would have the children at one end of the studio watching a movie behind a PVC curtain, while I taught the adults in the other room. This worked, except for Tuesdays and Fridays, when we had to get all the kids fed and ready for field trips. It was not worth it to me to have about 12 adults at noon interrupt the flow of over 150 kids in my summer camp, so I canceled the noon adult class.

When you sign a student up for summer camp, you are usually signing them up for the after school program in the fall, too. If parents need to put their children in summer camp because they are working, most likely, they will need to put their children in an after school program in the fall. If they do not, then you simply put them in your evening program at six o'clock on a traditional term membership to keep up their martial arts. This should be



a very easy transitional sale. These are stay-at-home parents who want their children to do something fun and different during the summer and don't necessarily need to put them in your after-school program.

I usually run specials for summer camp to get a lot of new students and to acquire a longer commitment for the summer camp. Summer break in central Florida runs 10 to 11 weeks, but in other states it runs between six and 12 weeks. Most families also take a vacation during the summer. This means the average student will be out at least one or two weeks, and some only do a partial summer, because they visit relatives.

I try to get most to commit to at least eight weeks by running specials. If a parent pays for summer camp in full, I will give a free week. If they can't take advantage of that free week, I will credit it towards their after school program in the fall or an evening program.

I give no refunds, only credit and it is posted at the front desk, the information board in the lobby, and in the new member paperwork under payment policies. I also run a \$129 special. If they enroll by a certain date and commit to at least eight weeks, they will only pay \$119 per week. If parents join on a week-to-week basis, they will pay my current rate of \$139 per week. I am always full with a waiting list, so I must be doing something right!

Actually these days I don't need to offer any specials and charge everyone the same at \$139 or whatever the market rate will bear week-to-week. I have already mentioned how to establish a rate. Call several daycares in your area and see what they charge for a full week of care from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Ask if field trips are provided and if they are included in the cost and if not, ask how much they are, so you can use them to set a rate and to compare value to your new prospect.

My summer camp includes two field trips per week. You can also call other summer camps and include them to have a full picture of what is available in the area. We always go swimming on Tuesday and our other field trips include bowling, gymnastics, ice-skating, bounce roller-skating, movies, pizza places with games and any other fun, safe place that will take large groups. Of course, I always call ahead and get a great group rate averaging \$8 per child for field trips and just \$1 at the city park swimming pool, which also has a kiddie pool for the non-swimmers.

I also name the city of Altamonte Springs as additionally insured through my insurance company, just like I make my transportation company name me as additionally insured and provide me with a copy of their insurance. Cut no corners, take no shortcuts, cross the T's and dot the I's!

Find out when your schools let out, and start advertising three months prior. This is one of the few times that I spend extra money on advertising in the main city newspaper under the summer camp section. I call my summer camp a Summer Martial Arts Sports Camp and show pictures of the fun things we do during summer camp in all of my advertisements.

I show the kids playing basketball, swimming, bowling, at gymnastics, ice-skating, roller-skating, and more. I talk about all the tenets of the martial arts in my flyers and brochures with an emphasis on fun; "Make this a Fun and Learning Summer at our Summer Martial Arts Sports Camp."

I make sure that I contact all of the schools in my area and ask if I collate my Summer Martial Arts Sports Camp flyers/brochures in stacks of 25 or 30, if they would please do a one-time send-home for me, so the kids will have a choice of something fun and educational to do this summer.

Even though most of these activities are field trips, the kids are still doing different sports. We even set up goals in our long school and play soccer on occasion. I put out my Summer Martial Arts Sports Camp roadside signs by all the schools about two months before the children get out for the summer. I make sure that my Summer Martial Arts Sports Camp flyers are in all the schools two months before, and if they have a summer camp referral guide at the school, I make sure that my camp is in it. I signed up 26 people in one day once! They didn't just all call and come in on the same day.

These people called me and I called them back and told them I only had a few spots left and that they needed to make a decision by Friday, since camp started the following Monday.

The same thing applies to mid-summer, when you change gears by changing your signs back to the After School Martial Arts/Free Transport/555-5555 signs, and also change your brochures in the schools. There is no reason not to be full if you run through these two events twice over a 13- to 14-month period.

You will need to staff your summer camp ahead of time, so think early about who you are going to have help you. As I stated in the staffing section, you will need an adult to open up in the morning and work the front desk. You will need another responsible staff member on the floor as well.

Obviously, I don't need 8 or 10 staff members at 7:30 a.m. when I open up, with only 8 or 10 students dropped off that early, so I stagger my staff as needed. By the time the first class starts at 10:00, all of my staff is on duty.

We break for lunch right after the morning class at 11:00 a.m.

Students need to bring their own lunch, since we do not provide meals. I give the staff that came in the earliest their lunch break at this time and the others at 11:30 and 12:00, while the children are playing team games. I make sure the kids clean up most of their own mess after lunch and put away their lunch boxes, go to the restroom, and then go out on the floor and sit down and prepare to watch the movie at noon. The exception to this is on Tuesdays and Fridays, our field trip days.

If there is no testing or tournament class, I will discuss Stranger Danger, child lures with role-playing, or have questions and answers on the history of martial arts or any character/safety development topics. Very few of your children actually get into real street fights at school or elsewhere, so although we teach self-defense through being proficient with our martial arts skills, it is truly more important that we teach how to avoid violence effectively. We can do this once a week on Friday after class or every day after class, while the children are waiting to go home through role- playing and what-if games. It has been said before, "So as you train, so as you will do."

Some of your students will be interested in getting out of the school and actually "playing the game" by going to tournaments on any given Saturday. I don't push my kids to compete. However, I may suggest to someone who shows a lot of talent that they might give it a try and see if they enjoy the experience. There is a whole sport aspect to the martial arts that can involve the whole family.

I have been extremely successful in Florida by dominating the state martial arts circuit for years, because of my MATA After-School program. By having children with you every day after school and in the summer taking two classes per day, we out-worked the competition, placing my school into the Florida Black Belt Hall of Fame for top competition school in the state.

After 44 years in the martial arts, I have accumulated many awards, but I am most proud of this last award more than all the others, because it means that my product is very good. You can do the same thing when you have your students with you five days per week, instead of two or three times per week in the evening class. Your kids will really get proficient over the summer, if you all work at it!

Let's go over a typical full day of summer camp. Children start arriving at 7:30 a.m. The staff will already be there with lights, air conditioning, air freshener, and a smile to meet and greet parents dropping off their children for the day with confidence. An adult will be at the front desk, while a responsible staff member on the floor will get a game going with the few students who are there at this time. As more students and staff arrive, additional games are started.

Incidentally, I let parents know at enrollment that they can drop their child off in their uniform, so they can save on washing and wear and tear on their good clothes, except on field trip days. I also let parents know through my monthly newsletter that it would be a good idea to have a second fresh, clean uniform, so they don't always have to be laundering the other one. The students who don't come in their uniforms immediately go into the locker room and change into their gis and wear them all day at the school.

We have a choreographed snack time in the morning and afternoon in the summer camp. The morning snack time is 9:30 a.m., or half an hour before class time, unless it is a field trip day when they get to buy their snack when they get back from the field trip. This will give them a break from the morning games/activities and will provide you with additional income.

Sometimes, just to break up the daily routine, I will put a movie on in the

morning until class starts at 10:00. It is okay to be creative once you have a foundation. We put away our games, clean up our snack area, and line up for class at five minutes till ten. The kids do a little, but my staff sweeps and mops several times every day.

We line up in seiza, formal kneeling position. This keeps children from running around and works great with large numbers. I get control by having everyone sit perfectly quiet for 30 seconds without even a fidget, or we start over. If parents are watching through the one-way glass in the viewing area, they will be impressed at the start of true discipline.

I tell the students, "You can do anything you want in life, but you have to get control of your mind, then your body will follow. It starts right here, right now, so sit still and don't move. Show me you can do it! Great! I am very proud of you. I knew you could do it! Let's get ready to review some martial arts material and learn some new things in class today."

We break our groups into four different areas/rooms according to belt rank and age and begin our morning class. You may have one room, which you can still break into smaller areas. I use PVC curtains that I found in the phone book under "blinds." You can use any national brand that comes with a warranty. I open them for some events and close them for teaching and they work absolutely great; I wouldn't think of having any school without them! We line up in seiza to bow out.

Then I dismiss small groups to get their lunch boxes from the locker room, where I have already placed an instructor to prevent chaos. They go into the snack area, where I have another instructor policing the area, and eat their lunch.

I know I am talking about a lot of instructors, but I run no less than 120 and

as many as 175 students all day, with 6 to 8 people on staff the majority of the time. I do know that if you only have 25 students in your summer camp and you send 10 boys to the locker room unattended, you will have a problem sooner or later in the locker room and/or snack area. The girls aren't much better! It is always easier to get a large group of children under control if they are never allowed to get out of control.

This is why my staff and I use whistles. We train our kids to behave from day one by giving the expectations in an orientation day. Our students do not talk above a whisper on the buses or vans so as not to distract the driver and this carries over to arriving at school and entering. This is all done quietly to maintain control from the very beginning.

After lunch, we clean up, get a drink, use the restroom, and go into the main room to watch a movie on a large TV that runs through my stereo system. Make sure that you only watch G-rated movies. You can save money by asking children to bring in their favorite movies and you can let them vote on the movie they want to watch. This is when I give most of my staff their lunch break, since I don't need a full staff to watch children watch a movie.

When the movie is over, we have another drink and restroom break, and then have our second snack time. This is the other planned time to spend money in the summer camp. Most kids spend \$2 per day in the snack area every day.

Those who have either finished their snack or do not want a snack will go into the main room, where we will play games and have fun. I have a basketball hoop in one room, we play dodge-ball in the middle room, musical pads in the third room, and the fourth room is always a sit-down room, where they play board games during the summer. This room doubles

as an area where they can do homework, if they choose, in the after school program.

At 3:30, I have the instructors go around and ask everyone to go to the bathroom if they need to, since we will be starting class soon.

At ten minutes till four, we put up all games and line up. We bow in at 4:00 for our afternoon session of martial arts that lasts until 5:00, or the same schedule that they are accustomed to from the after school program. I have ten actual martial arts classes per week during the summer camp. You can have D.A.R.E. officers, police, or firefighters scheduled to give a talk or demonstration. These types of “classes” still fall within the character building aspect of the martial arts.

I still have testing every month on a Friday. The parents will be invited, and the students who aren't testing will watch a movie with a teacher in the other room. At 5:00, everyone lines up in seiza and bows out, recites the morals of the dojo and our manners. We then dismiss them in small groups to get dressed to go home and put them into the quiet room, where they can play quiet games until pick-up.

Pick-up is between 5:00 and 6:00 with a late fee for anyone after 6:15 of \$3.00 for every 15-minute block of time. During the summer, you will have late drop-offs and early pick-ups, because of the nature of summer camp. Parents do things with their kids during the summer.

I make sure that they do not miss the class times in summer camp, just like in after school. I am not a daycare and the only reason that I am open is to teach martial arts and I cannot make your child a winner if he or she is not in class. If a parent drops off after the morning class and picks up before the afternoon class, we are going to nip that in the bud. It may happen once



in a great while, but will not be permitted on regular basis.

On field trip days, we have class from 9:30 to 10:30 and break for lunch earlier so we can clean up and get changed out of our uniforms and into our street clothes with our American Karate Academy T-shirt for easy, quick identification and for advertisement. This is one of the reasons I schedule the field trips on the days that I do.

I always have swimming on Tuesday so I can reiterate to all the students and parents picking up on Monday night to bring their swimsuit, towel, camp T-shirt and street clothes for the field trip the next day. If there are some children absent on Monday, then we make a few phone calls to remind the parents what to bring the next day.

Many field trips require socks, like bowling, ice-skating, and roller-skating. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and I want everyone to have fun and everything to run smoothly, so this is why I go the extra mile.

We always try to make the Friday class especially fun and interesting during summer camp and after school in the fall. Since we normally have one sparring class per week in the after school program, during summer camp, we often have two sparring classes on Wednesday as we are open all day long. We may do sparring drills or bag work.

You can mix these up to have some sparring teams compete against each other for small prizes. You can have an obstacle course set up to work on agility, coordination and team spirit with competitions and small prizes. We use blow pops as prizes sometimes.

We make sure the children are wearing the appropriate clothes, including their camp T-shirt and socks, if needed for the particular field trip; warm

clothing if we are going ice-skating, etc. We also reiterate the rules of conduct on loading, riding, and disembarking the buses to and from the field trip. We also go over the rules of conduct that will be adhered to at the specific field trip location.

Most importantly, we take a count/roll call before we leave our facility, loading the buses in groups of ten, take another count/roll call upon arriving at the field trip, again when leaving the field trip, and once again after returning to our school. We have never lost a child in over 26 years!

While kids are at the bowling alley, your staff will not be bowling with them. They are there to work and watch children at all times. If a child wants to go to the bathroom, they are accompanied by a staff member. The same thing goes at the movies. I have staff members strategically placed at the ends of all the rows of my children.

We take up the whole center section of the movie theater on Friday at noon for a new run summer blockbuster. I call ahead to get a group rate and this seating arrangement. My instructors are at the ends of the bottom rows and the top rows and will accompany all students to the bathrooms. The children will not be going up to get snacks or drinks, since we will be there early and get all of that ahead of time.

When we come back from the Tuesday swimming field trip, everyone is tired, so we don't play physical games in the afternoon. Instead, we put in a movie and chill out until class time at 4:00. Remember, they change back into their uniforms as soon as they get back.

Occasionally, we vary from the hardcore curriculum in the afternoon, especially after a tiring field trip, but we will still do a class with martial arts related skills in it. We may elect to have martial arts relay races for the

whole school, instead of breaking into the four rooms.

We may have four randomly organized groups perform lead-leg round kicks the length of the school and do cartwheels all the way back, and then tag the next person in their line to do the same. The winning group gets two blow pops, the other groups will get one blow pop and they all will learn how to have a strong lead leg for sparring! The possibilities are endless and you will learn to improvise over the months and years.

Make sure that you call ahead to reserve space for your field trips because you will find many other summer camps will be booked on the same days at the bowling alley, gymnastics center, swimming pool, etc.

You can even publish a list of your field trip dates on your summer camp flyer or on an in-house flyer that you give to new members so they can plan their summer weeks. You can even have the new members fill out exactly which weeks they will be attending, thus giving you exact numbers to deal with for field trips, transportation and staffing.

Use common sense and caution when working with children. Many kids wear their swimsuit under their uniform or clothes, and others need to change out of their uniform and get completely undressed in your locker room to put on their swimsuit. You do not want kids undressing completely in front of other kids in your school or in front of instructors, ever! Escort these children to your bathroom, where they can shut the door and have complete privacy.

While on this important point, never have children in your office behind closed doors at any time, unless the parent is with you or other adult staff members; even then, the door should be open, unless it is with the parent. If you have to reprimand a student and need the parent present, make sure

you do it behind closed doors, so as not to embarrass the parent in front of other adults.

For that matter, if you have to talk to a parent about anything other than praising their child, take it behind closed doors; you don't need an argument at the front desk. Never manhandle children; never have children sit on your lap. Make sure that your staff does not touch the students inappropriately. A pat on the arm or back saying good job is all that is appropriate, or maybe a high-five!

You do not even want to be found innocent of a charge such as alleged sexual misconduct. You will be dead in the water if it is brought against you, even if you are perfectly innocent. In this business, you will never live it down and you will go out of business.

These are good people/management skills. A very successful employer that I worked with for six years asked me, after I had bent his ear for five minutes about a problem with a client at the health club, "Jim, how did it all end? Did you leave them sweet or do they want to slash your tires?" Running a summer camp is the only time that you do have to work full-time and it is for just a couple of months. Good luck!

## **Chapter Review**

1. You can operate an after school program without a summer camp and vice-versa, but it is financially better to do both, as one feeds the other.
2. Summer camp is full-time and you will need to have enough staff to overlap the hours into the evening or be prepared to work 65 hour weeks (I have done it!).
3. Structure two classes per day each day with one class at 10:00 a.m. and

the other to coincide with your after school program from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Onfield trip days, you may only want to do one class for a total of 8 classes instead of 10.

4. Consider PVC vertical curtains to separate rooms.

5. Advertise for summer camp by calling the local newspaper in January to get your ad ready for the summer camp guide section of the paper, if they have one.

6. Get your brochures out in the schools a month before they get out of school and make sure that you have your summer camp signs out at the schools, too.

7. See if some or all of your schools will let you do a send-home of your summer camp brochures/flyers before the kids get out of school.

8. Mid-summer, you will go around to the schools and change your brochures and signs (switching gears) to advertise for after school.

9. Call several daycares in your area and other martial arts schools and set a rate for summer camp.

10. Reserve your field trips in advance!

11. Get kids from summer camp enrolled in your after school program or evening program before end of summer.

12. Have specified times to purchase snacks two times per day.

13. Play only G or PG (if you have discussed it with the parents first)

movies.

14. Make sure that your students don't miss actual class time during the summer, as it is the only reason they should be there.

15. Make sure that all of your students purchase a summer camp T-shirt for identification of field trips and for plus sales for you.

16. Take roll before you leave your school, when you arrive at your field trip destination, when you leave, and when you arrive back at your school every time!

17. Make sure that children wear the appropriate clothes for field trips; socks for bowling, warm clothes for ice skating, and swim suits and towels for swimming.

18. Bring enough staff to adequately supervise all field trips.

19. If children have to change from their wet swimming suits, let them change in a locked bathroom by themselves, and not the open locker room.

20. Never have children in your office behind closed doors alone with you or any instructor.

21. Make sure your staff are not on their cellphones or texting when at your school working and especially on field trips. They need to pay attention to the students at all times.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

## Epilogue

My friends, I have hit on many topics, and I know that many of you will take the ball and run with it and expand upon what I have laid out for you. Many of you will merely incorporate this program into your existing program and still teach classes all day long, six or seven days per week. Others will find a way to operate this program in a big way, like I do, and teach fewer classes per day and fewer days per week. All ways are legitimate, but either way you go, you will earn a lot more income.

Some of you will stay right where you are, while others will move to a large wholesale warehouse space and realize a great gross with an even greater net. There will be the school owners who will incorporate a Black Belt Club, a Master's Club, or a Leadership Team into their MATA After-School program and make it even better than mine. I say go for it!

I have been in the martial arts for over 44 years and have been operating this program for over 26 years, and at my age, I wish to do things just the way I do. I earn a fantastic living with plenty of free time to enjoy my family and golf! At what point in your life will you say it is time to start enjoying life? I have arrived and I wouldn't change the way I do things. I don't have a large evening class or weekend classes through choice. I don't have any elite programs for richer students.

All of my students pay the same, all of my students have unlimited classes, all of my students wear the same uniforms, and all of my students can get extra help in tournament classes at no extra charge. I can offer this because of my MATA After-School program.

I still teach traditional Motobu-Ha Shito- Ryu karate the way Soke Shogo Kuniba taught it, and I have him on old tapes that I study, even though he has passed on. I ran health clubs for many years and I know what it is like to work 60 and 70 hours per week and to be responsible for scores of employees.

I do not wish to work like that anymore. That does not mean that you cannot put in the hours and motivate and delegate staff to run a million dollar per year gross in one location. You can do it with the MATA After-School program and a large traditional program.

Go for it while you are young and reap the rewards, and then you will be on cruise control by the time you are 50, maybe 40 or 30, if you start now! No program in the history of the martial arts will enroll more students and generate more income than the transported after school martial arts program, period!

No program in the history of the martial arts will change the lives of more children than the MATA After-School program and if you are in the martial arts for the right reason – the love of teaching – then the money will come.