

## Master's Martial Arts Academy 25th Anniversary Tournament



Saturday, March 22, 2014, Master's Martial Arts Academy held its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary intramural tournament at Wheaton Academy. Nearly 100 students from 10 locations came together to compete in sparring, kata, weapons, and speed breaking.

The tournament started with a time of worship. Decked out in his karate *gi* and black belt, Huntley Brown played joyful songs in the atrium. The crowd sang and clapped to the music. They also enjoyed cake celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Master's Martial Arts Academy.

Activity then moved to the Warrior Dome gymnasium. The audience first saw karate demonstrations. Founder and lead instructor, Dave Pearson, wowed the crowd by breaking a 60-pound block of ice. Chris Medlen demonstrated his flying jump kick: first in clear air then over a bicycle. Finally, a five-year old student showed the crowd his spin kick.

Next was the first competition: speed breaking. Eight competitors broke six boards in a row on individual sets of cinder blocks. Newly minted black belt, Jay Vanagas, won the competition in 2.16 seconds by cleverly breaking two adjacent boards at a time.

The next competition was weapons. Three advanced students performed fierce katas with weapons, such as swords and sticks. Ben Marks won the competition impressing the judge with rolls to pick up and drop off his weapons.

Current and previous students gathered in the middle of the auditorium to perform the gold belt kata and class drills together. The gathering demonstrated the diversity of the student body with male and female students from kindergarteners to adult seniors wearing belts of all colors. The students then moved to the bleachers for a class photo.

After that, the gold – black belt kata competitions began. Students confidently demonstrated their kata in a packed gymnasium while competing with others at their belt level.

The competitions paused for comments from Master Dan Lee of Lee's Academy of Martial Arts who is a long-time friend of Karate Dave and his current instructor.

Finally, the competitions closed out with light-touch sparring. Students of similar belt, skill, and size were paired off in 50 matches divided between a Junior and Senior Ring.

An awards ceremony appropriately followed the competitions. In addition to recognizing the winners of the martial arts competitions, Pastor Dave Pearson gave two Christian testimony awards to Jennifer Medlen and Jay & Sherri Vanagas.

Closing out the awards ceremony, Dr. Bill Schroeder, Dave Pearson's childhood pastor and former student, received his honorary black belt. He then challenged the audience with a reminder from the life of Joseph: "It's always right to do right." Dr. Bill closed the tournament in prayer.

We thank God for a high-energy yet safe tournament with enthusiastic participation of the students and warm support from the audience.

- Reverend Dave & Evelyn Pearson March 25, 2014

*Karate Dave breaking 60 pounds of ice*

*Photo, video credits: Jared Teikele*

