

Making a Difference

Every aikido teacher makes a difference to the world around them. The essence of aikido teaching means that students learn to become:

- More positive
- More relaxed.
- More persistent
- More sensitive
- More empathetic

That's a pretty impressive list and almost certainly not exhaustive. The point is that when teachers change the lives of their students just a little bit for the better, the students, in turn, make a positive difference to everyone that touches their lives. The more we can get our message out there, the bigger the difference we can make. Peace and contentment, just like most other things don't just happen by chance, they happen because communities work at it.

The question is how can we accelerate this process? Aiki Extensions (AE), a not for profit international organisation, based in the USA, offers a solution. Founded by like minded people who wanted to take the aikido philosophy off the mat and into the real world, AE has supported and continues to support, specific projects that use aikido in everyday settings to make a real difference in some very difficult circumstances, (<http://www.aiki-extensions.org/projects.asp>).

These projects change lives for the better but inevitably need funding to get off the ground and this is where you can help. You really do not need to do much more than you already do. All you need to do is be prepared to donate the proceeds from one class or maybe run a seminar locally and donate the proceeds of that. International Aiki Peace Week, one of AE's most important initiatives, gives you a great opportunity to do just this. (<http://www.aikipeaceweek.org/>).

If every teacher from every club that happen to read this article were prepared to run at least one fund raiser a year, then it would make an enormous difference to the work that AE can support. What's more there are some very real benefits for your club:

- A chance to re-iterate the real message of aikido to students and maybe the public at large. (*Why not run a peace seminar in your locality?*)
- A chance to build bridges and network with other clubs in your locality.
- A chance to work with people that think like you.

Needless to say AE not only needs financial support, but it needs your ideas and energy to help it grow. So if you want to do more, please join us,

(<https://www303.safesecureweb.com/aikiextensio/secure/join.aspx>). In this way you will not only provide more financial support, but you can help shape the work we do.

If you have a specific cause that you think deserves attention, then let AE know and we will see what we can do to promote your idea and help make a few more dreams come true. We can also put you in touch with other members who maybe work in a similar field. AE is almost sole run by volunteers and needless to say the work is limited by their expertise and the time they have available to support AE outside of the rest of their lives. If you can add to the skill base and/or are willing to help in any way, then so much more will be possible. Please do contact us if you want to find out more.