



Culture of Safety Dojo & Wellness Center Announces November 12 Grand Opening in Rogers Park

Offering trauma-informed, queer-affirming Jin Sei Ryu karate and empowerment-based self-defense for all, and traditional massage and Zen Shiatsu bodywork.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, October 28, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chicago, IL – October 28, 2022 – Co-founders Amy Jones and Kyren Epperson prioritize treating each person as a whole: “We know that people come in all shapes, sizes, ages, and abilities. We are committed to the principle that each person gets to practice karate with the body they have—not the body they or someone else wishes they had.”

Jones and Epperson are fourth- and third-degree black belts, respectively, in Jin Sei Ryu karate, and are certified in Empowerment Self-Defense (National Women’s Martial Arts Federation). Epperson is an AOBTA®-Certified Zen Shiatsu bodywork practitioner, and Jones is a licensed social worker.

Culture of Safety opened in 2019, offering Empowerment Self-Defense training, an approach to self-defense that includes physical and interpersonal skills that help people prevent and defend themselves from physical and emotional violence. The emphasis on emotional safety and inclusion of interpersonal skills to help participants recognize and respond effectively to the precursors of physical violence is where Jones says her social work training is especially relevant. “My approach to empowerment-based self-defense exists at the intersection of my social work training and my martial arts training,” she says. Culture of Safety offered trainings to businesses, schools, and nonprofit and community organizations, but had no permanent physical space.

In June of 2020, they started offering Jin Sei Ryu karate classes. According to Epperson, “The pandemic shut down our self-defense business for a while – but it created the opportunity to start a new karate school. Not having a space wasn’t a barrier, because nobody was exercising indoors in group settings anyway. And as Rogers Park residents, we were looking for a way to serve our community.” In the beginning they held classes online and outdoors in Warren Park, and later in space donated by the United Church of Rogers Park.

In January 2021, Epperson was inspired to get certified in Zen Shiatsu bodywork because they wanted to help people suffering from chronic stress and overwhelm. Epperson describes Zen Shiatsu body work: “Imagine that massage, yoga, and acupuncture got together and had a baby!

Shiatsu benefits the muscles like massage; involves gentle passive stretching like yoga; and benefits internal systems like sleep, energy, and our emotions like acupuncture. It can be as gentle or as deep as the receiver needs and is practiced over clothing, so the client can wear whatever feels most comfortable and relaxing to them."

By early 2022, Culture of Safety needed a permanent home. They had almost 60 karate students, were again getting requests for self-defense workshops, and needed a space for Zen Shiatsu and massage. They found the perfect space on North Clark Street in March and opened their doors for classes on August 29.

Culture of Safety will host a grand opening celebration on Saturday, November 12. The public is invited to take a free trial class or watch karate, self-defense, or Zen Shiatsu bodywork demos. Those interested in a free trial class should arrive 15 minutes before class starts and wear clothing they can move in. Those interested in watching the demos should arrive between 12:30 and 1:00 pm.

The full agenda follows:

- 10–10:30 am Karate class: Peewees (ages 4–5)
- 10:30–11:15 am Karate class: Juniors (ages 6–7)
- 11:30 am–12:30 pm Karate class: Youth (ages 8–11)
- 12:30 - 1:00 pm Meet & Greet with the founders and current students
- 1:00–1:30 pm Karate and self-defense demos
- 1:30–1:45 pm Zen Shiatsu demo
- 2:00–3:00 pm Karate: Adults and Teens (ages 13 and up)

Culture of Safety is a woman- and queer-led small business and home of the Chicago branch of Jin Sei Ryu Karate-Do International. We offer ongoing karate classes for kids, teens, and adults; empowerment-based self-defense workshops; massage; and Zen Shiatsu bodywork. We are located in Rogers Park at 6961 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60626. To learn more about our karate classes, empowerment self-defense workshops, massage, or Zen Shiatsu bodywork services, visit [our website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), Instagram, or [LinkedIn](#)

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