

## Teaching Aikido to Children 2008 Seminar

TAA Director Aviv Goldsmith organized the second in a series of workshops, called Aiki Kodomo Kenshukai – Teaching Aikido to Children, over the weekend of October 4-5, 2008 at Aikido of Berkeley, California. Forty sensei and sempai came from around the world to participate in this ground-breaking seminar to learn new and mat-tested methods for enhancing children's classes in the dojo. Many Aikido styles and associations were represented with participants ranked from 4<sup>th</sup> kyu to 6<sup>th</sup> dan.

The event was supported by two other non-profit groups, Aiki Extensions and Aikidokids.com. TAA members participating in the event included Senseis Hans Goto, Bernice Tom, Stevan Gengo, Craig O'Connor, Lars Eric Holm, Claire Conway, and Donna Pienkowski.

The eleven workshop faculty, gathered to provide "how-to" resources and share best practices. Among the many highlights were high-energy classes taught by Senseis Michael Friedl and Bill Gray. New dimensions to training were offered by Senseis Ross Robertson, Jose Bueno (Brasil), and Alex Vanderburgh. Sunday's participation included a presentation about the Awassa Peace Dojo in Ethiopia.

The workshop addressed a range of concerns for Aikido teachers of children including: safety, developmental learning stages, ukemi, warm-ups, games, how to practice randori, balancing the introduction of new material with the need for practice of basics, and ways to work with teens. Starting off each day with laboratory learning, children from SF Bay Area dojos (recruited by Peace Camp Initiative director Rob Kent), got on the mat for two "live" classes. Most of the other classes had participants jump in and pretend to be kids, an easy invitation for this group of young at heart aikidoka.



The feedback from the workshop was overwhelmingly positive so Aviv Sensei plans to continue organizing a similar event every two years, alternating between US east and west coast locations. The next Aiki Kodomo Kenshukai will likely be held in 2010 at the new Aikido in Fredericksburg dojo in Virginia. He also hopes to make a video available of the event in 2009. For more information contact [aviv@aikidoinn.com](mailto:aviv@aikidoinn.com)