



July 2022—Issue No. 6

Association Newsletter

Empowering Members To Empower Us All

In This Issue:

.....
Around the world
in ESD

Announcements

Adventures in
Credentialing

A path to FREEDOM

When we think about freedom—true freedom—what does that look like?

Imagine if you never had to worry about what others thought, because you were so rooted in knowing that you are on your path, serving your purpose.

For so many of us, empowerment self-defense has given us the confidence we need to serve others in a meaningful way. We know that we are exactly who and where we need to be. Now that is freedom.

When we learn the guiding principles, tools, strategies and choices embedded in Empowerment Self-Defense, our whole outlook on life can change. We realize that we are capable of so much more than we ever dreamed.

Empowerment Self-Defense elevates us in a way that makes us feel alive and—yes—FREE! This month's newsletter is dedicated to freedom. That feeling that you are flying through the air and trusting that no matter what happens you will land on your feet.



AROUND THE WORLD IN ESD

This month, we are excited to share a few exciting ESD happenings from around the world with you, and we would love to hear from you too!

If something in this month's newsletter resonates with you, please let us know by replying to this email or sharing your thoughts on social media, tagging #ESDProfessionals.

ESD Fyah

[Dayra Fyah](#), a hip-hop artist and now ESD entrepreneur, is battling violence with music and ESD. Dayra learned ESD at an ESD Global training in Costa Rica in 2019. Today she runs her own organization called Aliadas de la Vida (Allies of Life) and mentors ESD instructor trainees. For Dayra and the women of Ecatapec, Mexico (located just outside Mexico City), violence (especially perpetrated by the men in their lives) is something to contend with daily, and femicide is all too common. Dayra is dedicating her career to ESD and hopes her grandchildren will experience the change she's fighting for.



Hope for Healing

Nuna, executive director and founder of [Wounded Healers International](#), completed her ESDG Level 1 Instructor Training last month in Los Angeles. Wounded Healers, an organization operating in Kenya and Maine, is dedicated to increasing awareness around sexual violence prevention and survivor's support by empowering both girls and boys to create a culture of mutual respect. Nuna is ready to bring self-defense training to the communities she serves.

AROUND THE WORLD IN ESD



"I Want My Pink Belt"

Aparna Rajawat, executive director and founder of [Pink Belt](#) in India, is the subject of a Hollywood documentary (à la Skateboard Girl) coming out soon. It's about her work teaching self-defense and empowerment to girls and women all over India. With violence against women rampant there, she asked herself, "If not me, who?"

Pink Belt teaches self-defense (168,000 participants and counting) and trains instructors (2,000) in 5 categories: 1) Emotional Strength, 2) Mental Strength, 3) Legal Strength, 4) Digital Strength, and 5) Physical Strength. We can't wait to see the story of Aparna's incredible journey on the big screen.

"Through Pink Belt Mission we aim to create awareness for a balanced society in which everyone is respected and treated equally."

—Aparna Rajawat

Freedom to THRIVE

[Thrive Empowerment Center](#) supports the safety and resilience of all people —especially women, children, and marginalized groups—and believes that significant strength and healing can be achieved when people have the knowledge, tools, and space for it. The Center works for a safer world free from violence, oppression, and fear.

Co-founders Lindsey Ross and Lauren Bailey seek to provide many kinds of support to help people thrive. They offer therapeutic classes and empowerment self-defense training, as well as community outreach to support students wherever they are. Thank you to you both for helping others live life freely!

THE RISE CONFERENCE



NWMAF Conference

[The RISE Conference](#), the NWMAF's annual summer event, is a multi-style training camp and professional self-defense instruction conference. The 2022 Conference will be an in-person event held at Daemen College in Amherst, New York, August 3-6. Attendees come from all over the United States, Canada, and beyond.

- August 3: Self-Defense Instructors Conference (SDIC) – Professional development for self-defense instructors.
- August 4-6: RISE – Classes, workouts, and workshops in martial arts, healing arts, and self-defense.
- August 6: SUPER SATURDAY – Classes open to ALL genders and ages 12+. Saturday evening culminates in a members' performance showcase, plus a raffle and expo!
- Learn more about the RISE Conference [here](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Sheila's monthly [ESD Circle](#) is happening again on Thursday, 14 July at midnight PST!
- Our monthly office hours with Tom Rose will be on Thursday, 21 July at 12 noon EST.
- Tasha Ina Church's [online empowerment self-defense course](#) was #1 on page 1 of the Udemy platform out of 3224 online self-defense courses. Congratulations!
- Check out our latest blogs by Michael Penafiel on [Working as a Padded Instructor](#) and Tasha Church on [Signs that YOU might be an ESD Professional](#).



"ADVENTURES IN CREDENTIALING" A NOTE FROM SHEILA WATSON

An adventure is a journey into and through that liminal space between the passion pushing you forward and the fear pulling you back. Without both, it wouldn't be an adventure.

Leading the development of an ESD credentialing program was a project of passion from the first sharpie-scribbled notes taped to my living room wall. The energy was crackling in the room. I was pacing, tossing ideas around, jotting notes, circling, drawing lines of connections, as I imagined a process that would culminate in ESD being widely recognized as a profession.

The ESD instructors I had been working with knew we needed something like this. They, too, had passion. They believed in the concepts and the methodology of ESD. They were actively working toward a violence-free world in their own communities.

And yet. There was a nagging worry, "Where do we go from here?" We needed a next step. We needed a push forward. An adventure.

But how could we take a profession that is so complex and so nuanced and so open to creativity and innovation and personalized "special sauce" and transform it into something that can be objectively measured? How could we take a community with so very much variety in lived experience, in language, in culture, and create a perfectly-shaped container for it? And who was I to lead this thing? I felt full of doubt. I was worried. Afraid.

I know what to do with fear. I asked myself, "What's going on here?" The answer wasn't difficult or complicated. We were stepping into the unknown. Something that hadn't been done before. That fear was a message from my intuition. And it was telling me to take that step. To expand. To explore. To go on an adventure.

We did. I hope the expansion of ESD with the creation of the Credentialing Program brings us into our circle. A circle which speaks with many voices, turns towards one another, and shares one purpose.