

Dancing dragon to debut

For the first time in its nine-year history, World Tai Chi Day-Stillwater will feature a traditional Chinese dancing dragon, a project led by Stillwater tai chi master Kahing Li to honor 2024 as the Year of the Dragon.

Volunteers and instructors from Healing Within Acupuncture Studio, which organizes the annual event, came together over several months to create the dramatic dragon. The dragon's head, designed and built by Stillwater artist and tai chi instructor William Erland, is complemented by a bright red body where several volunteers will hunker under to make the dragon dance to the beat provided by members of the Women's Drum Center-St. Paul.

"It has truly been a community effort," said Healing Within studio owner Aimee Van Ostrand.

This free, family-friendly event on Saturday, April 27, joins others in thousands of cities worldwide in movement and breath as one. The outdoor event on the terrace of the Stillwater Public Library will include various styles of tai chi, along with several extended energy forms such as cane form, staff form and the beautiful fan form. Movement will be led by several area tai chi instructors from Minnesota and Wisconsin, and no experience is necessary.

"World Tai Chi Day-Stillwater brings our community together to raise awareness and join in the global practice for world peace and unity," Van Ostrand said.

Each year Healing Within studio selects a local nonprofit organization working on global humanitarian efforts to receive donations from the event. This year's recipient is The Urban Village in St. Paul. Included in the donations will be \$2 for every specially-designed dragon T-shirt, designed by artist Erland using a Chinese technique called Xie Yi. This original dragon design uses as few brush strokes as possible and must be completed in one sitting. This technique is intended to be done in a meditative state.

The public is welcome to participate or observe. Library doors open at 10am and the event will run 10:15am to noon, rain or shine.