

# KIDS FIRST OPENS DOORS

**CHILDREN:** Thousands of pupils -- off school because of a PD day -- invited to activities designed for them during the annual Kids First Day.

By KATHY RUMLESKI, THE LONDON FREE PRESS, April 21, 2010



VIDEO: The Aikido Network will be opening its doors to London children on Friday as part of "Kids First Day" organized by Investing in Children.

When Derek Bindner opens his Aikido Network doors to kids across the city on Friday, he'll be giving them a lesson in self-esteem and how to protect themselves.

Bindner, the owner and chief instructor of Aikido, is participating in the popular city-wide children's celebration -- Kids First Day.

The event, organized by Investing in Children, is held annually in April when children are out of school because of professional development for teachers in both the public and separate boards.

It attracts thousands of youngsters to free events across the city and shows the opportunities and services in London for families. Kids First Day also recognizes the people, businesses and organizations that provide these services.

"It's a great opportunity for the kids to explore what else is out in London," Bindner said.

With bullying in the headlines, Bindner is relishing the chance to show families about his non-violent martial art.

"It's about character-building and goal-setting (and) learning anti-bully and self-protection techniques," he said.

"We show them how to prevent bullying and how to be strong on the inside because our martial art is different. We really go inside and we talk about . . . self-confidence."

For those interesting in exploring aikido, Bindner is offering a free class at 10 a.m. Friday. (See the listing on Page C8 for more information).

He recommends children arrive 15 minutes early to fill out a form and wear loose-fitting clothing without zippers or snaps.

Investing in Children's Greg Picken said almost all of the organizations involved last year are back. Three new ones have come on board for 2010: Upper Room Book Store, N'Amerind Friendship Centre and Covent Garden Market.