



Jiu Jitsu ParaTodos

Chácara do Céu favela- Rio de Janeiro- Brazil

My name is João Marcos, a.k.a. Apache. I am 38 years old and I lived in Chácara do Céu favela for several years, before moving to the favela of Rocinha. I founded the project **Jiu Jitsu for Everyone** to help my community by creating an activity to engage youth.

I began on March 19, 2012 and 34 youth are now taking classes with me. There are currently two classes, one for children and early teenagers (from 5 to 13 years old), and another for teenagers and adults (from 14 to 22 years old). As a rule, the kids have to be in school and get good grades. If a student is struggling at school, another colleague of the program is designated to help him. The program takes place at an ecological park and contributes to the harmony of the kids with nature.



I gave a lecture at the 'Rio+20' conference to show people how this project contributes to a better future not only for these kids but also for the planet, promoting peace, using natural enlightenment, recycling old jiu jitsu kimonos and respecting the environment. Recently, we received a visit from an NGO called The Paradigm Shift Project that was interested in my work and came to document my vision for youth engagement in favelas.

When I created the project I had no idea how hard it would be to gain financial support, and thanks to the NGO ParaTodos we now have a mat on which to train. All costs are currently handled by me, with a few donations from some of the parents of the students, but unfortunately I am not yet in a position to sustain these costs on my own. I use the donations for cleaning materials for the equipment and to cover my bus expenses to the project site. We are in need of funds to cover the cost of additional instructors as well as basic equipment. The jiu jitsu kimonos worn by students are mostly donated by friends, which is a great help because it would be much too expensive for the students to purchase their own. We are currently searching for partners able to help us to expand the classes to the favela of Rocinha, as we have already secured a spot there where we can begin the second step of the program.



Your help in this project would be tremendously appreciated by the youth of Rio's favelas, and I, too, would be most grateful for any support you can offer.



About me: João Marcos Soares Batista dos Santos, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Black Belt, Instructor and Coordinator of **Jiu Jitsu ParaTodos**
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