

# NEIGHBORS

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## WEST KENDALL



PHOTO BY CHRIS COTRONEO FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

**STAYING ACTIVE AND HAVING FUN:** Above, Alfred James Magnan, 5, practices his downward dog yoga pose at Magnan Martial Arts School in West Kendall. Right, co-owner Alfred Magnan gets wrapped up and taken down by his son Alfred James at the school, which will hold its opening Saturday.



## DREAM BECOMES REALITY

A HUSBAND AND WIFE WHO ARE EDUCATORS WILL OPEN A YOGA AND MARTIAL ARTS STUDIO IN WEST KENDALL

BY ANNIE VAZQUEZ  
Special to The Miami Herald

After losing her job while five months pregnant, West Kendall resident Tania Magnan was unhirable.

With nine years experience as a special education instructor for Miami-Dade Public Schools, Magnan was a victim of the school system's budget cuts.

Her resumé did help her land interviews. But as soon as principals got a glimpse of her swollen belly, they were no longer interested.

Frustrated and scared of rais-

ing newborn Broderick Michael and 5-year-old Alfred James on her husband's teaching salary, Magnan did the only thing she said she could: dream of better things.

One of those dreams was opening a yoga and martial arts studio with her husband, Alfred, 37.

That's about to become a reality.

On Saturday, the couple will open Magnan Martial Arts School in West Kendall.

To commemorate the opening, the couple will throw a

party from noon until 4 p.m. when discounted class packages will be sold and there will be raffles, T-shirt giveaways and face-painting.

"We are so excited," said Magnan, 39, who is a certified yoga instructor. "Ever since Alfred and I met 10 years ago, we wanted to do this, but it was never the right time."

Her husband is a black belt in American Kenpo Karate.

He said the couple poured their life savings into opening the 2,000-square-foot studio despite the shaky economy.

"There's always a fear of not succeeding, but I decided after what happened to Tania that I needed to take charge of my destiny and make something for

my family," he said. Alfred works at Somerset Academy in Pembroke Pines as a middle- and high-school computer teacher.

He will be keeping his teaching job and working at the studio in the afternoons and on Saturdays teaching mixed martial arts, including Kenpo Karate, Muay Thai Boxing and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu for ages 4 and up.

Magnan, certified in 2000 at Prana Yoga in Coral Gables, will be teaching Vinyasa yoga to pre-teens and adults.

Alfred said he is optimistic they will succeed.

"I've done my homework, and West Kendall is good place. There are a lot of single-family homes here with children," he

said. "Plus, I'm associated with a lot of knowledgeable people in this field."

Alfred said he is a certified Muay Thai Boxing instructor under Master Toddy and is authorized to teach Gracie Jiu-Jitsu.

He is also counting on his and Magnan's education backgrounds to help enrollment.

"We are going to run it like a second school, where we are teaching leadership and character development not just kicking and punching," he said.

*Magnan Martial Arts is located at 12039 SW 132nd Ave., Unit 22. For more information call 305-971-3668 or go to the website [www.MagnanMartialArts.com](http://www.MagnanMartialArts.com).*

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