

SALLY & MIKE

JUDO ALBERTA VOLUNTEER PROFILE



How did you get involved in volunteering with Judo Alberta or at judo events / club?

It is in our nature that whenever there was a need, we jumped in to help. When the kids started to compete and we were interested in volunteering, Hiro's Sensei's told us that they would train us how to do scorekeeping, draws etc. We volunteer at the club all the time. Sensei's knew they could always count on us and when the club needed help, we always stepped up and that was 2008 and here we are 13 yrs. later. By the way, we were introduced to judo by my uncle (Sensei An Chhay) who told us that he volunteered for over 40 years in judo and he wanted us to give judo a try instead of the other sport that was just 5 km away from our house instead of Hiro's which is 25 km away.

What brings a smile to your face as a volunteer? When we see that we are contributing to a need at a successful event (training camp, summer camp, tournaments) and when judokas appreciate our contribution. Mike always said the event is not successful or over until we put the mats in the trucks.

What is your favorite event to volunteer at? We cannot pick one. We like all the tournaments and training camps (e.g., Nationals, Rocky Mountain, Canmore camp, Summer camp and Winter camp, etc.). We choose to volunteer because we love the sport, the friendships (for our kids and for ourselves) and thoroughly value the time watching all the judokas grow from being nervous to being composed in victory and in defeat as they mature.

What Judo Club are you associated with? Where do you live?

[Hiro's Judo Club, Calgary, Alberta](#)

What are the top three things you would tell someone who is interested in volunteering? We will tell them that the rewards will be friendship for life, one will have moments of clarity and self-discovery when volunteering and finally, to contribute to a need with no expectation of return is a true gift. Especially for a non-profit organization, volunteering is always appreciated and needed.

What are your future goals? We would like to be part of judo as long as we can, and we will continue to volunteer when we can even if our sons might be too busy with schools/universities. Personally, we would like to aim for Shodan someday. We appreciate the fact that Judo is an inclusive sport regardless of country, ethnicity, age and gender. To witness an IBSA tournament in Calgary was an amazing experience. We also appreciate that Judo Canada grading system is very inclusive and recognizes contribution to the sport of judo include competitive and non-competitive routes.

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What do you enjoy about judo?

There are too many to list so here are the top 3:

- Sportsmanship – watching judokas train and compete taught us about sportsmanship. Majority of judokas demonstrated grace in defeat and humbleness in victory. We also admire competitive judokas who trained together at training camps and switched on their competitive mode at tournaments as they compete to win.
- Friendships and camaraderie – our kids built friendships with the other judokas who supported/cheered for them through victories and through defeat. Our sons, Jarrett and Keenan grew up in judo, they share their growing experience on and off the mats with the other judokas. Even if they were competitors on the mats, after bowing off the mats, they huddled and chatted as if nothing happened. For Mike and I, we built friendships with other volunteers (Senseis from the other clubs, referees, other parents) and we even became close friends with parents of our children's competitors.
- Science - the physics, the human body mechanics, use of center of gravity, use of psychology to perform moves and mental toughness to push after several minutes into overtime. We still watch in amazement.
- Fitness – our oldest son (Jarrett) started Judo in 2008, our second son (Keenan) joined in 2009, then Mike in 2013 and one day, Sensei Allan suggested that I should join too since I was sitting there for hours anyway waiting for the kids and Mike. Also, Hiro's Senseis said that I could do judo at my own pace and age appropriate. After talking to and feeling inspired by the other Judo moms who are also Judokas (Lynn Westlake, Jackie Demaere), I joined Judo in 2016. We are a proud judo family! My uncle was right! Judo is about life.

Why do you volunteer? We would like to give back, especially for non-profit organizations like Judo. We like to contribute to where things need to be done. Senseis know when there is a need, our hands are usually up.

Fondest / rewarding Judo moment?

Our fondest memory was when our sons shook hands with their opponents after the matches regardless of the outcome of their performance. We are very proud that Judo taught our kids the love for the sport, hard-work equals reward and the respect/friendship as they shook hands and hung out with their opponents/friends after the tournaments.

The moment I learned about sportsmanship was at the 2009 Rocky mountain tournament in Calgary when one of the Hiro's adult judoka competed for the first time (first match and he'd just earned a yellow belt). After he bowed in, about 10 sec. later he lost. After he bowed off the mats, he smiled and walked towards his opponent and I overheard him said "I knew you were going to use seoi nage!" and his opponent told him how to counter seoi nage! I was surprised and had huge goosebumps. I've actually "felt" what this concept of Sportsmanship really meant. We taught our kids sportsmanship as the philosophy, but the feeling was amazing and rewarding. It was about doing the best techniques on the mats and learned from it. Competition is about competing to win but be gracious whatever the outcome. The same man and his wife competed at EIJ tournament later and both took home medals.

The most rewarding is when we see smiles at successful training camps and at tournaments. I am also honored and grateful when some Judokas call me their Judo mom.