

# The Harmonizer

The Official Newsletter of the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation



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# The Harmonizer

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## On the Cover

Ontario Black Belt Shindo  
Grading May 2025

Jaden and Erica Ramundo  
Sensei Jim Atkinson  
Joseki Board Members

The Best Fighter is someone  
who never has to fight  
because they control the  
situation

-- "Bruce Lee"--

"This is my Life"

Hanshi Masaru Shintani

<https://www.shintani.ca/shindohistory>

# Message from the President

## ***This issue is dedicated in memory of Master Shintani***

Hello SWKKF Members,

Thank you to the members of the Harmonizer for another great edition. And thank you for everyone who submitted articles. Just a reminder that anyone in the SWKKF can submit articles if they wish – this is not limited to only black belts, instructors, etc. Anyone and everyone are welcome.

The National Tournament & Symposium this year in Simcoe, ON was a great success with a terrific social afterward in which we recognized some individuals with our REACH Award Program. I would like to personally thank everyone who was able to come out and back this event. Hanshi Shintani would have been very proud of the community, respect, competition, and support from all.

This month we will be holding a Senate meeting. At the end of the meeting our main goal is to ensure that we follow in the footsteps of Hanshi Shintani. He gave us a wonderful organization and it is our commitment to keep it strong. For these meetings we require the support of our Club, Regional and Provincial Representatives and most importantly, the students of the SWKKF.

The 2024-2025 season is almost at a close. It has been an incredible season, and I look forward to the 2025-2026 season.

Event coordinator (club host) – keep in mind to get your events into me as soon as possible. That way they can be added to the calendar of events, onto the [www.shintani.ca](http://www.shintani.ca) website and I can plan my travels for the year. Your continued dedication, support, and organization for the various events across the federation is appreciated (clinics, workouts, tournaments, etc.).

We will be scheduling a Town Hall Meeting with our members sometime in July/August.

Train with passion and be true to the basics. Enjoy your summer, be safe and I look forward to seeing you.

In Harmony,  
Sensei Denis



## Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation

# Finding Strength and Connection Through Karate

**By: Rene Dunkley**

**P.O.P. Wado Kai**

In the fall of 2024, a close friend invited me to a “Bring a Friend” open house at P.O.P. Wado Kai Karate. He had joined the dojo a year earlier, motivated by a desire to improve his health and bond with his son. I was intrigued by the idea as I had trained in karate briefly as a child and remembered enjoying the sport. With some trepidation, my son and I attended the open house, not knowing how profoundly this experience would impact us both.

From the moment we walked through the doors, we were welcomed with warmth and encouragement by Sensei Brian and Sensei Mel. Their unconditional support made it easy to return—though the hardest part had been showing up that very first night. Seeing my friend engage with his child that night inspired me to continue, especially as my son was facing his own challenges, adjusting to life with Crohn’s Disease. I saw karate as a way for him to return to physical activity, and as a meaningful opportunity for us to spend time together.

As his health gradually improved, we were able to attend more classes together. Our training time became a bright spot in our routines—invigorating, grounding, and restorative. For me, it offered a welcome mental reset from daily stresses. For my son, it marked a return to physical activity and a chance to reclaim a sense of normalcy. Watching him laugh during sparring or seek advice on techniques reminded me of the vibrant spirit he had before his diagnosis.

Returning to karate in my mid-40s was a completely different experience than my initial childhood training. This time, I had the support of a community—my friend, our classmates, the incredible Sensei’s and their assistants. Most importantly, I had my son as my karate partner. We motivate each other, celebrate each other’s growth, and push one another to improve.

This year, we proudly earned our Yellow Belts. As we were cheered on by our family members, we celebrated a milestone that symbolized not just progress in karate, but resilience, healing, and connection. We are excited to continue practicing over the summer and look forward to returning to P.O.P. Wado Kai in the fall—ready to take on our next challenge, together.





<http://www.shintanikarate.com>

Sensei Michel Gosselin presenting Hanshi Fred Simonaitis with his Shintani International Karate Federation certificate for his Kudan rank.



# Sensei Ron at the Delhi Karate Club

**By: Sensei Katrina Marques**

## **Delhi Karate Club**

Sensei Ron came to the Delhi Karate Club on February 26, 2025, for another great fun filled and informative karate class.



**Sensei Ron and Hunter.**

Sensei Ron started the evening off with the kids. This fun filled hour class went by quickly. Sensei Ron first focused on kicks. He showed the kids how to focus a proper kick – get low in the stance and push the foot. The kids worked with the pads and demonstrated the proper techniques.

Parents loved how interactive Sensei Ron was with the kids – he would pick them up while they were kicking to make them feel they were stronger and could kick harder. Parents commented on how Sensei Ron made sure he knew all the kids' names during the class.

Sensei Ron then demonstrated kicks using balloons and made several games out of it. Kids worked in a group and had to keep the balloon up, but they could only use kicks.



**Sensei Darwin trying to keep the balloon up.**

Volleyball or I should say volley balloon was next on the list. The kids had to play a game of volleyball where they had to pass the balloon using only their feet.

The kids had fun and were engaged for the entire class – Sensei Ron is a great instructor – gets personal with the kids, interacts with them on their level and the kids as well as the parents appreciated that he took the time to learn their names.

The adult class was next, and the Delhi club was host to 20 karateka students from other clubs that came to workout with Sensei Ron. Sensei Ron showed a number of techniques and went over the rules about hip movement and connecting the whole body. Sensei Ron worked different stances and explained the narrow baseball stance versus the wider stance and how the hip movement relates to each type of stance. Sensei Ron explains the movements and the rational behind the moves, so it is easy to understand. Sensei Ron demonstrates and works along side you so he can make some adjustments to help you move better.

It is always an honour to have Sensei Ron come and teach. The Delhi Karate Club was very grateful for Sensei Ron and to all the other karate students that came to workout.



**Adrian and Sensei Ron.**



**Sensei Ron showing he can hold up Sensei Brandon when his body is alignment.**



**Adrian, Sensei Ron and Sensei Darwin.**



**Sensei Ron and River.**



**Delhi Karate Club showing off their kicks.**



**Pike, Adrian and Anson showing Sensei Ron they can keep the balloon up.**



**Balloon volleyball.**



**Sensei Ron demonstrates a technique on Sensei Darwin.**

# When it's going your way

**By: Sensei Ryan McDonald**

**Regina Shintani Wado Kai Karate**

This article is based on some comments family, friends, loved ones made in jest and with love. In truth a lot of people inside and outside of this organization want you to succeed. This is vital for anyone thinking about attempting to advance.

Some of those comments include:

1. I don't know man are you sure?
2. You are not as young as you used to be.
3. Good luck, make sure to call me from the hospital!
4. Dad, you might have a "Dad bod"...

An opportunity came my way to attend the last grading in Delhi Ontario. My original plan was to join the joseki board and gain more experience behind the table.

That plan quickly changed when it was gently suggested I add myself to the list of candidates on the floor. Use this as an opportunity go through pregrading format.

I thought to myself, Wow! OKAY, here we go!

Panic quickly set in, I found "Swirtle" the good luck turtle my daughter Brynn gave me.

I immediately reviewed notes, and the grading syllabus. What am I doing....

## **Step #1**

Get out there.

With a smoking deal on a direct flight, emails with confirmation and itinerary arrangements made bags packed. "This is actually happening, I am doing this!

## **Step#2**

Hug lots.

Upon arrival Sensei Denis was all smiles with a giant hug with a laugh, "Hello again!"

Taking a slightly more relaxed approach to this is critical for mental health and overall well-being. Sensei Denis thank-you for hosting me personally, sharing your dojo. Sharing the sights of the Niagara region. Loads of memories to look back on from this trip. Thank-you for the countless things you do for the organization. Sensei's Ron Mattie and Jim Atkinson and many, many more you are helping forge a solid path for others walk in your footsteps.

## **Step#3**

Bring extra.

I travel with two Gi's. Why because when you push yourself chasing ranking blackbelts you are going to sweat. For those that know Sensei Alex Arndt fellow

MuskAmego...he brings three Gi's! He always pushes to the next level.

Pace yourself it's crucial, former injuries will, show up out of nowhere don't panic! Instead of doing ten of something do five, or just what you can.

When I am teaching in my home dojo I am blessed to have Sensei Cameron, Savanna, and Denver and finally Sempei Ethan.

I get to use the diversity of the group, to push the students forward.

In this instance trust yourself it's okay, things happen. That's how you grow, push through making positive steps in the right direction.

## **Step#4**

"Wow, I want to move like that!"

Upon arrival to the clinic, nerves started to kick in. This is normal for a lot of people, it means you care about what you're doing everyone is eager to earn it.

Of the many people I've meet and shared experiences with over the last trip, I learned that Sensei Evan Junkin was preparing for his 4th degree and Sensei Tom Liszt was lined up for his second degree.

Knowing I was about to share this journey with them killed my sense of fear.

From that moment forward this was a group effort.

Ranking black belts all advised as we rolled through the list of basics it proved very helpful keeping the students focused on the finer details.

During a portion of the clinic Sensei Ron Mattie asked Sensei's Evan and Tim to do a short set of movements together then posed the question to the floor.

"Did anyone see the difference"?

The answer was, "They are right where they should be for their rank."

This for some was a very big light bulb moment. Keeping the grading candidates at ease with there performance on the floor given all ranks and abilities in the dojo at the time.

I welcomed areas in the clinic when Sensei Ron would explain reasoning for a single move or group of techniques look to other ranking blackbelts and ask, "Sensei's anything to add?". You can help but grow from that setting.

Thank-you Sensei Ron for your help with details I need to address moving forward.

## **Step #5**

The time is now!

Coffee downed, snacks, lunch and lots of water!  
When you are riding with Sensei Ron you will get a healthy dose of fresh air, and great stories that start out with, "I remember when Sensei Denis was....."

We shared lots laughs on this trip.

Thank-you Sensei Ron you always hit mark for making a positive impact.

Walking into the dojo, I took a brief moment with the josaki board members

I having never personally seen a board that big in my life. My attention quickly turned to Sensei's Denis, Ron, Sherman, Bruce, and finally Brad at the far left side of the tables.

Nope not nervous, Hah! Right!

Every grading candidate was positioned to best suit the josaki board. Sensei Evan and Sensei Tom, both playfully gave me a shot in the shoulder saying, "You got this! It's going to be awesome!"

That it was.

I will forever be grateful to have shared in not only their personal experience, but all the students grading that day.

We collectively rose to the occasion.

At the end of it all many proud family members and loved ones got say, "Sensei".

During banquet to follow, it was wonderful to hear from so many deserving people sharing their personal love of karate as well many Sensei's introductions... you know who you are.

Doubt from others is expected, martial arts is a tough sport physically and mentally.

You must not allow yourself any negativity.

Our own self is our harshest critic.

My own downfall is saying, "I could have done that better".

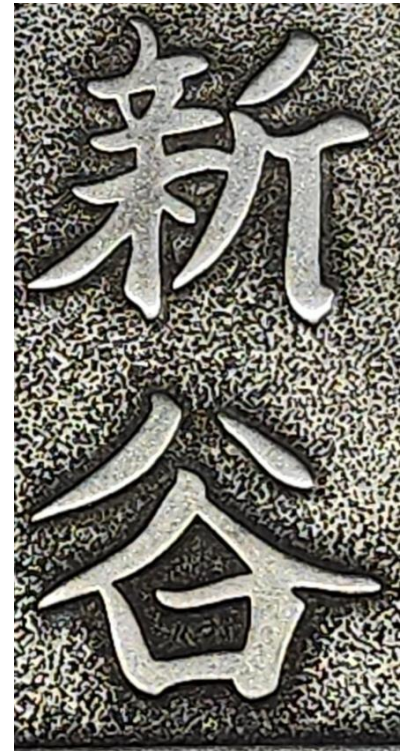
We are not perfect, but we can choose to seek perfection.

People over the years would seek out Sensei Shintani seeking advice on how they were moving. His genuine response to many of his students was, "your karate is good".

Thank-you

Once again, in harmony





**Masaru Shintani Legacy**

@masarushintanilegacy1318



# The Power of Community

**By: Dana Ellis on behalf of Sensei Thomas Lee**

## ***Dynamic Karate***

For many years, Dynamic Karate of Northwest Calgary has been part of the Edge School for Athletes community of volunteers. From “Reading Karate” to “Change Your Sport Day” to “dryland training with the golf team,” the partnership has been inspiring.

Sensei Thomas Lee and his wife Dana, a teacher at the Edge School, created a program that they called “Reading Karate”. Students had to complete reading challenges to achieve various belt levels. Sensei Thomas would visit the school regularly to teach the students the discipline of karate, specifically Power Kata. He also taught them Japanese words and how to count to ten. Sensei Thomas liked to say, “Reading is knowledge; knowledge is power - Power Kata!”

A yearly event at the Edge School for Athletes was “Change Your Sport Day”. This was a time for students to push their comfort zones and try new sports. Dynamic Karate participated in this event twice, teaching students from grades 4 to 12. Students learned how to punch and kick at targets and also acquired some self-defence techniques that would help them escape from someone who grabbed them.

Most recently, Dynamic Karate worked with students in the golf program. During the off-season, these students took part in yoga and karate as dryland training. The karate sessions were hard work as students worked on balance, flexibility, and focus. Students were interested in seeing how the skills of one sport crossed over into the other.

Dynamic and Edge have created a solid community partnership. The Edge School for Athletes appreciates the time and expertise that so many of the Sensei from Dynamic Karate have given to the students. They look forward to continuing the partnership for many years.



# Sensei Jeff Gervin Memorial Fund

## About the Fund

The Sensei Jeff Gervin Memorial Training Fund honours the life and passion of Sensei Jeff Gervin, a dedicated karateka and martial artist who inspired many through his commitment and love of martial arts. He believed that exploring different perspectives deepens understanding.

Each year, the fund supports karate students expanding their martial arts knowledge. Students may apply for reimbursement of seminars, courses, or training events in any martial arts discipline. The fund opens January 1 and remains open until the annual allocation (minimum \$1000) is used. For 2025, the fund will be available from May 1 to December 31.

### Eligibility

- Open to all SWKKF karateka in good standing.
- Up to \$200 per person per year; additional funds may be available if the annual budget remains at year-end.
- Eligible expenses: seminar or course fees for any martial art, inside or outside of the SWKKF.
- Not eligible: travel costs (hotel, food, gas) and expenses to host events (gym rental, honorarium).
- Participants may apply annually, without limit.
- Proof of completion (e.g., certificate or signed letter) is required.

### Application

- Register and pay for the course.
- Complete the Sensei Gervin Memorial Education Fund application form (proof of payment required).
- After completing the course, email confirmation (certificate, exam results, or seminar host contact) to [insert email address].
- Upon approval, reimbursement will be sent via eTransfer within 2-3 weeks.

## Applying for the Sensei Jeff Gervin Memorial Fund

Students are invited to apply for support through the Sensei Jeff Gervin Memorial Fund. Grants of up to \$200 are available on a first-come, first-served basis while funds remain. Please complete the application form available at <https://form.jotform.com/251126458723053> or scan the QR code to apply online.



The Spirit of a Warrior Never Fades

# A Canadian Karateka's Grading

**By: Sensei Scott Mahon**

**Whitemud Karate Club**

There are very few ways to describe the Black Belt grading process to outsiders, but an apt Canadian metaphor, especially at this time of year, is the Road to Lord Stanley's Cup.

*It's the longest, toughest road in Amateur Sport.*

That's a bold statement, but let's walk it down. To be granted the opportunity to grade you have long sequence of events you must pass:

- Each Kyu Belt with its own Grading (Yellow, Orange, Green, Blue and Brown)
- All Six (6) primary katas must not only be learned but understood and be tuned for specific skills being asked for at your grading level.
- 66 Karate Skills must be learned and demonstrated with precision.
- Any grouping of those skills is combined in a random recipe during your grading for you to learn, apply and to demonstrate during that grading. Several times. Then with a rotating group of random partners.
- Tournaments, training, practice, more training, coaching, more practice, clinics ...

In short, even making it to the Show requires significant dedication and an effort measured in years.

Grading Day compresses all that work into a single 8 hour day, for you to demonstrate to a Joseki Board of highly ranked and skilled karateka that you have learned it all, can execute it successfully on that day and show that you deserve to be in the company of these amazing VOLUNTEERS.

Let's make one thing abundantly clear. Every single person, coach and fellow student is there for you and with you not for large cash prizes, but of the love of Karate and in the Shintani spirit of making the world around you, and the people you choose to make part of that world, simply better.

Some testing days can be filled with anxiety for many. I didn't find that for mine. I was surrounded by a group of respected peers, friends made during those years of training and practice, dedicated senior karateka who are there to bring out the best you have to offer and to welcome you to an elite group of people.

Each person at a Grading is carrying on the legacy of Sensei Shintani who left the world a much better place than he found it. He provided a framework for his students to continue that work, which is visionary.

My road took 40 years, had several turns and off-road adventures and at what many see as the end of the journey, the black belt, I found a new road waiting for me. A road I get to walk down with friends and mentors together, making the world for my family and friends better - one punch, kick, kata, push-up and kyai at time.

I wouldn't change my path here for anything else.



**SWKKF/Shintani Wado Kai  
Karate Federation**

@swkkf



# A Glimpse into the Art

**By: Sensei Annika de Witt**

## **Millbrook Wado Kai**

I have travelled all over the world, but I have never been to Greece... until last Friday.

It was a cold, windy March evening in Lindsay, Ontario and we were set to meet some karate people for dinner before another big tournament weekend. But plans changed as the restaurant we were supposed to go to had made an error with our reservation...so across the street we went. To the Olympia.

As I stepped in the doorway I was transported to another continent and another time. The sights, the sounds, the smells, the people... the music. Guitar and lyra strumming melodic tunes with hints of melancholy... of culture and of history. The loud bustle of tables moving as the hosts, with arms wide open, welcomed the large group of us that had just walked in unannounced.

And then another piece of history happened.

The owners quickly recognized who had just walked in... the boys who had 30 years ago started the first Wado Kai club in Lindsay, right upstairs of this very restaurant when they themselves had just become its owners: Senseis Sanford, Dave and Darren. The three amigos.

What began as any regular karate dinner morphed into a night of reunion, remembrance and celebration (though I have begun to learn that every "regular karate dinner" is never just that, when you start to listen to the essence beneath). Stories of the early days in the 90's went around the tables, as even the chef (the other owner, a true Greek philosopher) emerged from the back to share in the festivities. History and memories of 30 years were shared... but the music in the background was a reminder of a history much bigger and deeper, and the people around the tables a reminder of a legacy that stretched far beyond Lindsay.

For among the three amigos sat their very own Sensei... Sensei Rick Leveille. A Sensei who had taught these boys what strength, grit and character it would take to be a true martial artist of the northern way: the bushido way. A man who had a history of five decades of karate and also held a deep trove of intimate knowledge of his own Sensei, Hanshi Shintani, dating right back to the 70's. Though Sensei Leveille sat quietly among his students and listened to the stories, the strings played a melody of infinite layers of memories held within him. The Sensei, without whom a club would have never been opened 30 years ago upstairs, nor would the hundreds of students in this area have ever existed. Including me.

How ironic that a mistake resulting in a change of plans would create such a night of deep and historical meaning .. almost serendipitous to what was about to unfold over the next few days.

As always, the evening went long and the night was too short, yet early the next morning wheels were heard rolling as black belts and students alike arrived at the school to set up for the big tournament.

By 8:30am the line-up of participants signing in stretched far out the door, and like clockwork minutes after 9:00 the gym was lined up from end to end with black belts of every rank and layers of kyu belts facing them, ready to bow in.

"Ski...Rei."

A wave of knees bent and heads lowered as we paid respects to our founders, Otsuka Sensei and Hanshi Shintani, followed by our president, Labbe Sensei, chief instructor, Mattie Sensei, as well as many of the senate members and other high ranks who were also present for this day.

Next... a special presentation.

Little did Sensei Leveille know that this next moment would be about him. Not a fan of attention or accolades, it had taken a lot of behind-the-scenes work to make this moment possible: to have Sensei Leveille travel all the way from his home in Elk Valley, British Columbia to Lindsay Ontario, without knowing that he was going to be a focal point of this weekend's events. For if he knew, he may not have come. It was his way in honouring his Sensei, to never look for praise, and in doing so he often avoided the spotlight altogether.

Sensei Kris Reynolds began by welcoming the hundreds of participants and spectators to this special day, this year being 30 years since Wado Kai Karate was brought to the Kawarthas. He then introduced Sensei Leveille to the many who would not know the significance of his presence with us. Next the three amigos spoke in turn, with loving sentiments of how much their Sensei has meant to them.

Sensei Dave spoke of the father-like figure that Sensei Rick has been to him and the years they have spent out west together. Sensei Darren shared how it's been said that of all members of our federation, Sensei Rick looks the most alike to Hanshi Shintani, mirroring his movements and style. And Sensei Sanford, in good Matthew McConaugh style, shared 10 life lessons he has learned from his beloved Sensei.

Sensei Labbe was called up to make the presentation to Sensei Leveille, a beautiful crystal plaque with these words etched into it:

**In Recognition of  
OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION**

**Your leadership & vision  
reflects your deep-rooted  
passion for preserving  
Hanshi Shintani's legacy  
and your dedication to the  
Shintani Wado-Kai Karate  
Federation.**

Sensei Leveille stood silently, listening to the words of the boys he had watched grow into mature men, receiving this great honour of recognition in front of a crowd of both seasoned karateka who knew him well, and brand new students who were hearing about him for the first time. He had no words, but his presence spoke more than any words could express.

The moment was beautiful and rich with layers of meaning and emotion... students, who were now experienced Senseis with many of their own students standing before them, honouring their beginnings and their own Sensei, who was in-turn standing before this sea of karateka, new and old, as a tribute to his Sensei: Mr. Shintani.



If I could capture the moment in a painting it would have every colour you could imagine, creating a tapestry of dichotomy: of young and old, of nostalgic memories and hopeful excitement, of both gratitude and longing, of

fierceness and enduring love... all tied together with a scarlet thread of pure loyalty. Sometimes words just can't do justice.

The moment passed and the day moved on into a schedule of rings and competitions as high ranks took their seats as judges and young black belts prepared to compete.

There's a scene in almost every mobster movie after the characters have been developed and their stories told, of good guys and bad guys with complex involvement in the mafia and young innocent families at home... a scene where guns all-of-a-sudden come out and shots are fired. Bullets start flying as do the bodies and stories of the people you have grown fond of. Then the moment happens where the sounds of action fade and a new tone is heard in sync with the calamity... the melody of a lone violin, and then a cello, followed by other strings that build to capture the complexity of the scene: of lives and stories being exposed and ended, and of others just beginning.

As I heard the centre refs calling "Hajime!" I looked across the gym and the noise faded while in my mind the sounds of an orchestra began to play. As fists flew and kicks sent students soaring, I could hear a song not of life and death like a mobster movie, but of the stories of every individual in the room, some at their very first tournament trembling as they attempted their first kata, and others nearing the end of their competition years and transitioning into a less-violent season of being a martial artist. So many stories filling a room with a richness and depth that could be felt, if you're paying attention to it.

It has been 30 years of karate in the Kawarthas. What started with a young Rick Leveille travelling hours every week as a white belt to bring karate back to his hometown of Wawa, created an opportunity for three young men to meet in the dojo and become the best of friends, who then ventured back to Lindsay to start their own karate club. That club grew and evolved into many black belts and new clubs opening in the region, bringing karate to thousands over the decades.

The story of a true martial artist is never a lone story of accomplishments, but a tapestry of stories woven together to create a collective masterpiece. One that stretches through space and time, holding history and beauty in its fist.





# Here is my journey from white belt to yellow belt

**By: Ashelee Dag**

**St. Catharines Wado Kai**

**Wado Kai Adaptive Karate**

Imagine stepping into the dojo or in my case wheeling and feeling a sense of family. That's exactly what I feel like each week I go to my lesson. I have been back in karate since mid 2023 and it wasn't a hard choice. I was thrilled to find out that there was a para division, the tournaments are an added bonus. It feels like a big family gathering. I started out as a white belt like everyone else and I worked hard each week on the kata's needed to graduate to yellow belt. My Sensei Steff Hancharyk is nothing short of a miracle worker. Some weeks it's harder for me to do certain moves due to the type of Cerebral Palsy I have, but none of that is a big issue, Sensei Steff pivots the lesson to set me up for success.

I truly didn't know if I would make it past a white belt, due to my medical complexities, but I have learned to believe in myself because who will if you don't believe in yourself?

There were so many tears from pain and noise I happen to have autism as well. We found some ear defenders work wonders for tournaments. I have learned to kick with my left leg which is the more involved side of my body. I even nailed an upper cut a few weeks ago. Yes, I may not remember how to start the moves but once I get going there's no stopping me.

Last night was a big night, it was grading night and I was a little worried I messed up in the kata, but I'm learning to self correct. When we lined up to receive our new belts a few tears spilled from my eyes, because I accomplished something huge and stuck with it. No matter what I felt like that week, I don't actually think I've missed a class, except for bad weather and I wouldn't have it any other way. Karate is helping me build muscle I have lost .



# Karate With a Sibling

**By: Eli Haley**

***Peterborough Wado Kai***

Karate is an inspiring journey and athletic sport that you typically do on your own. You set personal goals, chase passions, and find motivations. You strive to meet your expectations in a way that leaves you satisfied. However, I've been fortunate to share this meaningful journey with my younger sister, Esme. I'm fourteen and I've been doing karate for nearly eleven years—I'm now a brown belt. Esme joined me at the age of four. She's now eight and proudly wears an orange striped belt. She's dedicated to coming to classes and is picking up her Pinan katas very well. We both do karate at the Peterborough Dojo with Sensei Brodie.

When my sister first started karate, she was quite shy and rarely talked to other students, which is normal. But after she got her yellow belt, she felt karate wasn't right for her; she was too overwhelmed by the energy of the classes. It was even worse when COVID hit; we were behind screens. So, she left after that summer and took a long break. I still went to classes and climbed the ranks to brown belt. After a while, she wanted to come back to karate again and pick up where she left off. I was able to help build her the confidence

to show up to classes, and I gave her the ease she needed to train with others. Now, Esme comes to train in the dojo every time there's a class, with excitement and zero hesitation. She recently learned Pinan sandan in one class, and Sensei Brodie was super impressed.

It's times like these when you realize having siblings can be awesome and beneficial, especially in karate. Esme gets extra training inside and outside of the dojo. She gets to learn new moves, and we have more time to connect. She wouldn't have gotten to where she is now if it weren't for the extra training and confidence-building. In the dojo, I get to be the role model to everyone, including Esme. Being a role model means that people will look up to me, and I feel that makes me more disciplined and experienced. When it's time to spare or practice kata, I take the opportunity to partner with Esme and help improve her skills. That's why I believe that Karate can be a more fun and appealing experience with siblings.

Looking ahead, I'll continue to grow and learn alongside my sister. We've both grown a lot through karate, not just in skill but in character. I'd love to one day see her reach brown belt too, and maybe even become a Sensei herself. No matter what, I know that karate has and always will keep us together.



SHINTANI WADO-KAI KARATE FEDERATION

# 2025

REACH AWARDS PRESENTATION



The 2025 Male Athlete Award  
goes to...

**Sensei Geoff McDonald**

"...a strong desire to help others  
achieve their personal best..."



The 2025 Female Athlete Award  
goes to...

**Sensei Erin Couture**

"...positive, encouraging, and  
incredibly serious about her  
karate..."



The 2025 Contributor Award  
goes to...

**Sensei Elliott Knowles**

"...quiet dedication to the  
SWKKF...elevating the  
professionalism and visibility of the  
SWKKF across Canada..."

The 2025 Leadership Award  
goes to...

**Sensei Tom Foster**

"...promotes true growth in his  
students...both on the floor and out  
into the world..."



The 2025 Ambassador Award  
goes to...

**Sensei Steffannie  
Hancharyk**

"...truly humble...lifting others up..."



## SWKKF REACH Program

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Each year, the Shintani Culture of Recognition Program recognizes some of the organization's leaders, contributors, ambassadors, scholars and karate-ka for their contributions and achievements over the past year.

<https://www.shintani.ca/reach-program>

# Sensei Neil Prime Inducted into the CMAHOF

**By: Sensei James Ryan**

**St. Catharines Wado Kai**

Congratulations to our instructor, friend, and SWKKF Senate Member, Sensei Neil Prime of the St. Catharines dojo, who was recently inducted into the Cleveland Martial Arts Hall of Fame (CMAHOF) on Saturday April 5th, 2025.

Since 2017, the CMAHOF has aimed to honour the “unsung heroes” of the martial arts community – ordinary individuals who rose above the rest to give a part of their lives to help others learn the power of the martial arts for the benefits of not only the physical, but the mental and spiritual aspects as well.

To date, over 120 black belt instructors have earned the honour of induction into the CMAHOF, including the likes of Bruce Lee, Bill “Superfoot” Wallace, Joe Lewis, Ed Parker, Chuck Norris, Benny “The Jet” Urquidez, former UFC Heavyweight Champion Stipe Miocic, and now, Sensei Neil Prime.

When accepting this award, Sensei Prime had the following to say:

“I have been doing this as a non-profit gig all of my life... all of my martial arts journey, but we don’t do it for rank. We don’t do it for accolades. But when it happens, when we receive them, we are truly honoured”.

“A journey in martial arts is about serving the community. People that have taken a leadership role in any sport realize that. There is also a huge support mechanism involved, or it doesn’t work. Nobody is successful on their own.”

Well said, and once again, congratulations Sensei Neil Prime for this tremendous honour. You definitely earned it!

Thank you so much for all that you do, and for representing the SWKKF, as well as the Shintani Legacy. Given that you were a direct student of Hanshi Shintani, I am certain that he would have been tremendously proud of the man and the instructor that you have become. Hanshi Shintani was a man whose name and reputation had become synonymous with respect, humility, kindness and integrity, and I believe that Sensei Prime honours his late teacher in much the same way by personifying these exact same qualities.



# Karate in the North

**By: Sensei Richard Pilon**

## **Hanmer Wado Kai**

If you drive 4.5 hours north (no stops) from Toronto OR if you drive 4.5 hours south (no stops) from Timmins, you would end up somewhere in Sudbury. That's where I am. It's my hometown and also where the Hanmer Wado Kai Karate club is. Hi, I'm Richard Pilon and I am proud to be the head instructor of Hanmer Wado Kai as well as the Regional Rep for Northeastern Ontario.

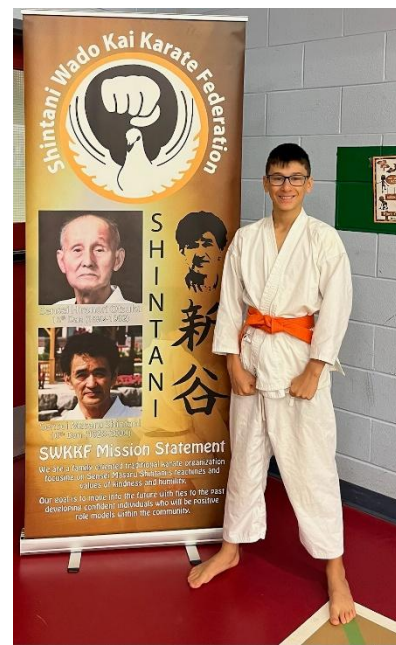
As a head instructor, I often ask myself 1. Am I doing the right things? and 2. Am I doing things right? Two simple questions that often question my abilities as a teacher. Luckily, the SWKKF has a number of ways to answer these questions. There are videos available, local clinics and even zoom(on-line) clinics that you can use to reinforce your karate. I personally attend as many zoom clinics as possible to keep current. All these methods work but for me personally, in person training seems to work best so, in early May, the family and I headed to Hearst for a Shindo clinic.

Not having any formal instruction other than zoom clinics, I was excited to workout with Sensei Jim Atkinson. We (myself, Gabrielle Pilon and Alexie Pilon) were also nervous because we weren't sure about our abilities. Sensei Jim started with the basics and a few drills to get us moving. We felt pretty confident and we were learning fast and then came a test. He had brought a long Bo for everyone and he began to teach us Shushi No Kon Sho, the first long Bo Kata. A

first for many of us. This is when I had a proud dad moment. My daughters, Gabrielle and Alexie flew through the lessons like they knew it all along! They are now teaching me this kata! This moment helps answer one of those questions; I was doing the right thing by exposing them to Kobodu (weapons training).

Fast forward to late May, the Shintani Memorial Tournament was upon us. Again, we travelled to Simcoe to participate in kata and kumite and test our skills. Being a smaller club and somewhat isolated, we don't get to practice against other clubs to pressure test our kumite skills. If you don't see where this is going, there's another proud dad moment coming. I must first thank my lovely wife Christine for taking some nice pictures and videos of my daughters throughout the tournament. She's a trooper sitting all day in those bleachers. To my surprise, both Gabrielle and Alexie earned medals in their divisions. Gabrielle received Silver in kata and Bronze in kumite while Alexie received Gold in kumite. To me, this solidified the first question, am I doing things right.

Earlier this year, Zack Savoie and Danylin Jobin also earned medals in various tournaments that they attended. I am extremely proud of all my students. Their hard work and dedication shines through. Watching your students grow and become leaders, there is no greater gift to receive as a teacher. To quote my Sensei Gilles Dupuis: "if I take one kid off the streets and lead them in a better path, I've done my job". As the year comes to an end, I can confidently say that I did some right things, and I did them right.



# The West is knockin, the East is Rocking

**By: Sensei Ryan McDonald**

## **Regina Shintani Wado Kai Karate**

This MuskAmego would personally like to thank everyone in the Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation that was part of yet another... EPIC Adventure!!

This all started when I floated the "idea" about traveling to take part in the annual national Shintani Wado Kai tournament. Here's how it went...

One last full shift at work, walk over to the payroll scanner, sign out... Whoohoo!

Green light, Go! Bags packed... Hello West-Jet! Wheels up 8:30pm, everyone knows you have to go the opposite direction in order get where you're going in the long run... "Hello Calgary!!" Minor lay over, grab a sandwich and a beverage. Onwards to Toronto. In flight, cookies, pretzels, ginger ale... mmhh. Touchdown Toronto 6:30 local. Yeah, for the record I don't sleep on planes. Arrived alive and well, little haggard still good!

Jumped in a shuttle to Simcoe. On route I was treated to the vast subdivisions and gateway communities of Toronto and surrounding area. 8:30am local time, the driver announced we are here! I graciously thanked him for the ride grab my bags thought to myself, "here we go!" Let's do this! Hugs were flying at the door, lots of introductions coming at me from all sides! It was amazing to finally get to know and spend time with everyone in person. Thank-you all the Sensei's and students that said hello! That alone was a standout memory in this adventure.

The next big question, "So your competing, right"... Heck yeah! I recall Sensei Denis looking at me like a concerned parent, my response; "I'll be fine". Famous last words from might men.

The tournament was inspirational to see such a diverse range and reinforced the sense of community throughout all levels of the organization. Eight rings where quickly queued up and ready. This lead to a full day of getting to know the students and Sensei sharing techniques taking notes along the way.

Next up, the Memorial Cup for ranking black belts to share kata and apply bunkai. All I can say is Wow, as an

instructor it was a sight to behold very impressed. Big Congratulations to Sensei's Sanford & Evan taking top spot.

I'd like thank members of the Shintani team, fellow black belt competitors pushing each other to the next level. Making everyone bring their very best for each event. For the record, Chinto was the kata of choice for me. Thank-you Sensei Darren Humphries for your time smoothing that out at home.

Following the tournament, we were off to the banquet. We were all in for a treat the venue was great the food was fantastic, lastly a very memorable touch, the "REACH" awards. Our Shintani members were honored for outstanding achievements. We are very lucky as an organization to have so many members that give, so we all can succeed.

Day, 2

Wake up! Shindo Grading/Shintani Team training....

Huh, uh, coffee please! No, I did not grade, I did get the opportunity to share the floor with grading candidates. Being able to spend time with the joseki board was very memorable for me personally.

Sensei Jim Atkinson took the reins and away we went! A handful Sensei's applied advanced bunkai and kata. I am still pouring over video and pictures to share. Big Congratulations to all the grading candidates the memories remain. Water refill! Hydrate!!

Nope not done yet!! Sensei Michel Gosselin was sharing techniques kata and kumite with the Shintani team. Thank-you Sensei Michel for spending time working Wanshu with me.

Water! Refill, hydrate!! Oh yeah, REST, RECOVER!

Hey, Sensei Ryan you want to join us on Monday? Okay!! It just keeps coming, Wow! You have no choice but to gain and improve from everyone sharing Sensei Shintani's legacy.

Thank-you Sensei Denis Labbe and Sensei Jim Atkinson for hosting me during this adventure the sites and sounds of St. Catherine's, Delhi, finally the Niagara region on the whole made the trip over the top.

To anyone coming through Regina, Saskatchewan drop a line and say hi, love pick up where we left off.











## Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation

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### Photo / Video Upload


**Photo / Video 1**

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or drag files here.

Brief Description of Photo / Video

People Shown In Photo

# What a Year and What and Honour

**By: Sensei Steffannie Hancharyk**

**Welland Martial Arts Centre,  
Wado Kai Adaptive Karate**

This year the para-students from the Welland Martial Arts Centre (WMAC) and Wado Kai Adaptive Karate (WAK) have been putting in the hard work. Students entered the Peter Cioffi Memorial Tournament held at WMAC followed by Nationals held at Holy Trinity Church in Delhi, ON. It was a tough division, and athletes were neck and neck, with close ending scores in kata and kumite.

This year I was honoured to receive the Peter Cioffi Memorial Award, and I have to admit that there must have been some luck involved. That being said, I am a sucker for the sentiment that luck is when hard work meets

opportunity. Addition to the Peter Cioffi award, I was very surprised and honoured to be the recipient of the 2025 Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation's Ambassadors Award. The Ambassador's Award is presented to those who honour the values of community and kindness. I am so proud to represent these values, but mostly I am so proud to be part of an organization that fosters these.

Kindness fosters community, and community is what the Shintani is all about, building harmonious communities through the teaching and training in Shintani Karate. Thank you to the organization and all it's members for embodying the Shintani values and for recognizing those values in me.

Additionally, I want to conclude by congratulating some of the para-students for attaining rank. They have worked hard over the last year, and their accomplishments are well deserved. Keep up the hard work, it is just the beginning.



Top Left: Mathew Belmore, Tom Liszt, Alexi Liszt, Steffannie Hancharyk, Shannon O'Neill, Front: Ashlee Dagenais



Right: Alexi Liszt, Left: Mathew Belmore, Welland Martial Arts Centre



Left: Sensei Denis Labbe; Right Steffannie Hancharyk



Centre: Ashlee Dagenais, Wado Kai Adaptive Karate receiving her yellow belt, Right: Steffannie Hancharyk, Left: Skye Cotter



Centre: Jeffrey Murray, Wado Kai Adaptive Karate receiving White Stripe, Right: Steffannie Hancharyk, Left: Skye Cotter



Centre: Shannon O'Neill Wado Kai Adaptive Karate receiving yellow belt, Right: Steffannie Hancharyk, Left: Skye Cotter



Centre: Wado Kai Adaptive Karate Right: Lane Jackson, receiving a stripe, Left: Ridley D'amore



Centre: Welland Martial Arts Centre, Centre: Alexi Liszt receiving Blue stripe, Right: Dave Damude, Left: Steffannie Hancharyk



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# Sensei Jim's Visit to Nordik Wado Kai

**By: Sensei Yvon Lebel**

**Nordik Wado Kai**

Karatekas of all ages and ranks from Sudbury, Wawa, Timmins, Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing and Thunder Bay joined the Hearst gang for a fun filled two-day Northwestern Ontario Regional Clinic hosted by Nordik Wado Kai.

We all had the privilege to have SWKKF Senate Member and Shindo Chief Instructor, Sensei Jim Atkinson as our Guest Instructor for the weekend.

From games, basic and advance techniques, different perspectives, Shindo and Bo, I think that I can safely say that everyone in attendance were mentally and physically exhausted. What better way to spend ten hours in the Dojo!

Thank you to the Northwestern Ontario Karate Association for hosting and especially to Sensei Jim Atkinson for taking time away from his busy schedule and travelling the distance to share his knowledge with us.



Sensei Jim Atkinson presenting Sensei Michel Gosselin with a custom Shindo in its case







**SWKKF/Shintani Wado Kai  
Karate Federation**

@swkkf





# Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation

From the Logger & Atkinson Family

We would like to thank all that have generously donated to this year's Logger Family Memorial Fund.

**The total amount funded was \$3500.00.**

This is an amazing tribute to Chris, Wendy & Brittany.

In honor of the Logger family this year's funds have been donated to the SWKKF PARA program which is being used for travel, protective equipment and sport wheelchairs.

The hope was to raise enough to purchase one sport wheelchair, however your very generous donations have raised enough to buy 2!!!

I can't thank you all enough.

Sensei Jim Atkinson

## Donors

Jim & Karen Atkinson

Nancy & Joe Manning

Jeff Logger

Marco Reyes - Jarvis Karate

Sharon Beaulieu

Karen & Steve Taylor

Debbie & Jamie Smith

Viki McCullough

Rudi Atkinson

Lisa Atkinson

Ed Atkinson

Shelley McGregor

Carl & Ronda Atkinson

Welland Martial Arts Centre

Rod Philip - North Simcoe Karate

Darren Humphries

Katrina & Brandon Marques

Michel Gosselin



## SWKKF/Shintani Wado Kai Karate Federation

[www.shintani.ca](http://www.shintani.ca)



## From the Harmonizer Committee

Wow! Another engaging newsletter thanks to YOU!

Please continue to send in articles, the next edition will be in November.

Wishing you all a fantastic summer.

Your Harmonizer committee

[harmonizer@shintani.ca](mailto:harmonizer@shintani.ca)

Committee Members:

*Team Lead* - Sensei Alice Pinto – Nordik Wado Kai - Hearst, ON

Sensei Kevin Dyck – Moose Mountain Wado Kai - Carlyle, SK

Sensei Yvon Lebel – Nordik Wado Kai - Hearst, ON



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