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Lessons Well Learned

Ashburn team travels to Richmond Area to compete in Virginia Karate State Championships

(Highland Springs, Virginia, Sunday, March 29, 2009) – Based on the results of today's Virginia State Championship karate tournament, Dylan and Melody Howe's time after school has been well spent.

Both brother and sister competed in the USA-NKF state championship competition held in the Virginia state capitol. The competition attracted over 200 martial artists from across the state, including 34 from Williams Martial Arts and Fitness (WMAF) in Ashburn, Virginia. The tournament was a qualifying event for the national competition in July.

At today's tournament in Richmond, Dylan, a twelve-year-old brown belt, earned first place state champion trophies in kata (forms) and kumite (sparring). Melody, his eight-year-old sister, also a brown belt, earned bronze in kata and kumite.

Both siblings got their start in learning karate as part of WMAF's Ashburn-based after school program.

Melody credits learning karate with helping her pay closer attention in class. She also says that learning her bo (weapons) kata has helped her memory. According to her brother Dylan, karate has "given me more confidence and helped me get in better physical shape."

Both say that one of the biggest lessons they learn at WMAF is to "never give up."

In 2008, Melody was state and regional champion in kobudo and Dylan was state champion in kumite, and state, regional, and national champion in kobudo.

While both have been very successful as competitors, they approach karate in very different ways. Melody prefers kata, where the competitor must perform an exacting routine based on pre-arranged movements. Dylan prefers kumite, where two competitors engage in freestyle sparring. They also differ in motivation. Melody says she finds her biggest motivation in the WMAF instructors that work with her daily. Dylan's drive comes from seeing other young people like him at the school who have achieved black belt status.



Both agree that they want to win more gold medals. And both say that training with their friends is the best thing about being at WMAF.

“I have been really impressed with the determination and hard work that Dylan and Melody have shown over their last two years with us,” says Clinton Williams, founder of WMAF. Williams is a fifth degree black belt and has been in the karate business for over 30 years.

The WMAF team brought home to Northern Virginia a total of 48 medals, including 23 gold, 13 silver and 12 bronze.

The event was open to traditional karate competitors from Virginia and surrounding regions that competed to qualify for the 2009 USA-NKF National Karate Championships which will be held July 17-20th in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

The USA National Karate-do Federation (USA-NKF) is the National Governing Body (NGB) of Sport Karate within the United States as recognized by the United States Olympic Committee. It is at the USA-NKF National Championships that the Official USA Karate Team is chosen for both adults and juniors to represent the United States in international competitions.

The tournament was co-hosted by Williams Martial Arts, Brian Hobson Karate Studio and Justice Karate American Shotokan of Richmond.

Competition included kobudo (weapons), kata (forms), and kumite (sparring).

The WMAF team’s next competition will be at Broad Run High School May 3rd.

For more information about WMAF and details of the 2009 Karate season, including the National Championships, go to www.williamsmartialarts.com and www.usankf.org .

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