



# TIKK NEWS

Fall 2009

*"The Kai was great in '08,  
and be more than fine in 2009"*

Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai

Perfecting Character Since 1991

## Four endure long road to black belt at TIKK



By LAURA MURRAY  
Sho Dan

Four ik kyus learned in August that it is indeed a long road to make sho dan and, in one case, sho dan ho.

The long road, which included as many as 10 years of training, a week of intensive testing and an eight-mile run, culminated at the Summer Shiai Aug. 29 at the Lewisville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post.

There, Andrew Black, Daniel Midkiff and Chuck Blommaert all were promoted to **sho dan**.

Before that though, Shane Murray was promoted to **sho dan ho**, or junior black belt, and he

(See SUMMER SHIAI, page 6)

New Sho Dans, from left, Daniel Midkiff, Andrew Black and Chuck Blommaert and new Sho Dan Ho Shane Murray enjoy a moment after the shiai at the Lewisville Veterans of Foreign Wars Post where they all earned black belts after a week of intensive testing.

## Purple belt Austin Gillham takes Shihan's lessons to heart

Private First Class Austin Gillham, who also is a purple belt at Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai, attends a Coppell High School football game and also takes in a few classes at TIKK during his recent visit to Coppell after finishing basic training.



By LAURA MURRAY  
Sho Dan

At least one Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai student took the lessons Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen offers in class each day to heart and then some.

TIKK students know that the United States would not be what it is today if it were not for the thousands who have served in the military. And they know the importance of honoring those who have served.

Purple belt Austin Gillham, who has been (See GILLHAM, page 11)

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## SHIHAN'S CORNER

## A Give and Take World

Try and give more than you take. Some people take all the time never giving back. Eventually it catches up to them and they wonder why their lives aren't as great as they could be.

If you give more than you take, you will be surprised how many things seem to go your way. Life just seems to be a better quality and you just feel better about yourself. So give more than you take. Make a difference.

—*Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen*

## NEW STUDENTS

August 4 ..... Brayden Boultinghouse, Seguin  
 August 24 ..... Jennifer Mull, Granbury  
 August 24 ..... Crystal Vaughn, Granbury  
 August 24 ..... Seth Longo, Granbury  
 September 3 ..... Emma Van Atta, Denton  
 September 8 ..... Shivaniah Mummidianand, Plano  
 September 15 ..... Phillip Bardwell, Seguin  
 November 14 ..... Alexander Burgos, Denton  
 November 17 ..... Clifton Hummel, Coppell  
 November 21 ..... Abner Orozco, Denton

## CALENDAR

December 27 ..... Mr. Andrew Black's Birthday  
 January 15 ..... Mr. Chuck Blommaert's Birthday  
 February 13 ..... Mr. Mike Harper's Birthday  
 February 18 ..... Mr. Kyle Murray's Birthday  
 March 5 ..... Mr. Mark Hendrix's Birthday  
 March 22 ..... Mrs. Tracy Dickey's Birthday  
 April 3 ..... Mr. Mike Cohen's Birthday  
 April 7 ..... Mr. Daniel Midkiff's Birthday  
 April 14 ..... Mr. Dennis Przybyla's Birthday  
 April 15 ..... Mrs. Laura Murray's Birthday  
 April 17 ..... Mr. Kent Kirkpatrick's Birthday  
 April 23-25 ..... Gasshuku, Copper Canyon  
 April 25 ..... Spring Shiai, Copper Canyon

TIKK  
&  
TIKK NEWS

Appreciates  
The Shah Family's  
Support  
Of  
The Newsletter!!!

## TIKK NEWS

TIKK NEWS is published periodically by karateka of Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai, established in 1991, and is distributed to students at all the school's dojos and to others interested in TIKK activities.

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## Plano dojo moves to new weekday location



TIKK Plano dojo in action on a Tuesday evening at the new location at Elite Champion Gymnastics.

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By **MARK HENDRIX**  
Sho Dan

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The Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai Plano dojo opened a new location for weekday classes Oct. 1. The new dojo is located in the facility of Elite Champion Gymnastics, 2621 Summit Ave., Suite 300 in Plano.

The new workout area is bright and spacious being over 3,000 square feet in size. Mirrors are placed on the front wall and numerous floor pads are available. Classes are held Tuesdays from 6:45 to 8

p.m. and Thursdays from 7 to 8 p.m.

Saturday classes will continue to be held 8:30 to 10 a.m. on the gymnastics floor at University Gymnastics, also in Plano, just a few blocks from the new location.

All three classes are offered to both junior (ages 12 and under) and senior karate students. Class sizes range from 15 to 25 students.

Classes are taught by co-instructors Ni Dan Carol Gue and Sho Dan Kent Kirkpatrick. Sho Dans Mike Harper and Mark Hendrix assist with teaching duties.

## YOUTH CORNER

### *TIKK's youngest student trains in Japan*

**K**ason Chesky is the youngest student among the Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai members.

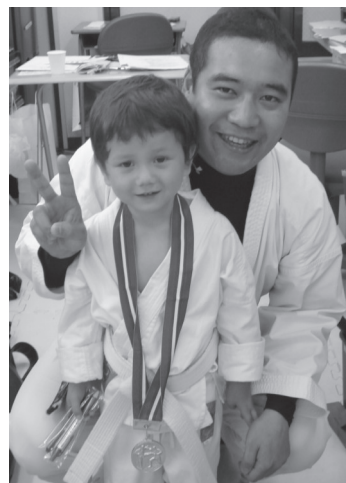
He joined TIKK right after his fourth birthday this spring. Kason trains at the Denton dojo at least twice a week.

He says, "Karate is super fun because you learn a lot of stuff."

This summer when Kason

went to Japan with his mom, who is from Japan, and sisters, he joined a "Kyoku Kai" for four weeks and attended the karate class every day. At the last class, the sensei presented Kason a medal for his dedication.

He now has two red stripes on his white belt from TIKK and is determined to become a black belt some day. In September Kason received his first patch from TIKK.



Kason and his Japan sensei



### Commemorating the life of Shihan Dale Jenkins

Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen attended a special service in October in New Jersey to mark the 25th anniversary of the passing of Shihan Dale Jenkins, Shihan's first teacher and a major influence in Isshinryu. Shihan shared his experiences with Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai black belts at the Oc-

tober black belt workout. Some of Shihan Jenkins contributions to Isshinryu include: Pinon I and II, Pivot Kick Routine, Multiple Attack Routine I and II, Shobu Kumite, Shobu Dai Ich, Kihon Bo, Kihon Sai and snap basics.



### Western Days Delight



## North Carolina visit

### Shihan offers expertise to NCIKK, reunites with family, friends



Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen, right, enjoys a visit with Sho Dan Mike Cohen, left, and Alan Kent, who formerly trained at Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai.



Kyoshi Shihan gets to see his niece Heather Kristensen for the first time in 25 years during his visit to North Carolina.



Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen, front row, right, conducted a seminar Aug. 22 at the second shiai of North Carolina Isshinryu Karate Kai, which is headed by Sho Dan Mike Cohen, front row, left.

Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen traveled to Greensboro, North Carolina in August to conduct a seminar for North Carolina Isshinryu Karate Kai students.

The seminar was held in conjunction with the school's second shiai on Aug. 22.

Sho Dan Mike Cohen, who earned his black belt from Shihan at TIKK in 2005, is the head instructor at NCIKK. He opened the

dojo in 2008 after moving to North Carolina in 2006.

NCIKK now has about 20 students, Mr. Cohen said. For more on NCIKK, visit: <http://sites.google.com/site/ncikk1/hm>.

The North Carolina trip also was an opportunity for Shihan to visit with friends and family he had not seen for years. He saw Sensei Alan Kent, who trained at TIKK and now has a school in Graham, NC.

And most exciting for Shihan was being reunited with his niece Heather Kristensen, whom he had not seen since his brother Allan's funeral in August 1984.

She now lives in North Carolina.

## ***Sensei Rupp's ladies tennis team wins championship***

Sensei Jeannie Rupp showed she's not just good in karate. Her subdivision's ladies tennis team from DeCordova Bend Estates won the 2009 United States Tennis Association Texas Sectional Championships Lone Star Ladies held Oct. 24-25 in San Antonio.

Six of eight ladies on the team were able to attend the tournament, but now the group has grown to 12, Sensei Rupp said.

She adds that Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen has told her how her karate can help her tennis game. "Doing the push-ups the way we do—on our knuckles—will help my tennis," she said.

## **Nevada Isshinryu Karate Kai's Dennis Przybyla trains at TIKK**

Nevada Isshinryu Karate Kai head instructor Dennis Przybyla made his way at least three times this fall to train with Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen.

Mr. Przybyla, who earned his sho dan from Shihan at the Gasshuku in April, combined the training sessions with some business travel.

## Summer Shiai...

(From Page 1)

became only the third student in TIKK's 18-year history to earn that rank.

Mr. Murray, who began training at TIKK in the junior class under Renshi Maria Kristensen in 1999 at the age of five, will be eligible to test for sho dan next summer when he turns 16.

He follows in his brother Tyler's footsteps by going through all the ranks. Sho Dan Tyler Murray became the first TIKK student ever to progress through all the ranks when he earned sho dan in August 2008.

The eldest Murray brother, Kyle, skipped the junior black belt rank and went directly to sho dan in 2007 because he was 17. At the time he was the first teenager to ever earn a full-fledged black belt at TIKK.

Another highlight of the shiai was when Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai gained another sensei. Ni Dan Jeannie Rupp was promoted to **san dan** and given the title of "Sensei." She joins Renshi, Tommy Thomas, Susan Harris, Tony Palos and Tina Palos in holding this prestigious title.

Sensei Rupp opened the Granbury dojo early this year and also won first place in kata and kumite at the Isshinryu World Karate Association world championships this summer in Pittsburgh.

Deanna Rupp, Elizabeth Kleppinger and David Van Winkle all moved on to **purple belt** while Grant Dennis earned his **blue belt** and Tristan Watson got **green belt**.

New **yellow belts** included: Kaylee Bordeaux, Colleen Clarke, Kalen Jones, Mann-Ning Li and Albert Solares.



### It's Sensei Rupp

Kyoshi Shihan Kristensen congratulates Ni Dan Jeannie Rupp on her promotion to san dan and being given the title of "Sensei."



Plano instructor Kent Kirkpatrick, Mike Harper, Mark Hendrix and



Yellow belt Micah Maguire busts through the board at the shiai.



Ik Kyu Shane during the Mu Midkiff gets re



Chuck gives Colleen Clarke her yellow belt as fellow Plano black belts Tracy Dickey and Tracy Dickey share in the excitement.



1k kyu Chuck Blommaert busts through a block.

**I**t's a great honor to have joined the ranks of the black belts in Texas Isshinryu Karate Kai. I want to thank Kyoshi for helping push me through the experience. Thanks are also needed to all the black belts for pushing me through it all. Thank you.

—*Chuck Blommaert*  
*Sho Dan*



Murray kicks 1k Kyu Chuck Blommaert Multiple Attack Routine, while 1k Kyu Daniel is ready for the next move.



Purple belt Mark McGlaughlin busts through a board at the Summer Shiai.

## Ik kyus undergo mysterious change during testing

By DANIEL MIDKIFF  
Sho Dan

I think my first impression of brown and black belts was that they were god-like. Here was someone who never messed up, and flawlessly executed every technique with speed and power.

As I got older, my impression changed from gods to superheroes. I'd seen some brown belts get punished, but thought nothing of it. After all, even Batman messed up now and then.

Then I became a brown belt, and entered into all the pressures and responsibilities thereof. That was a wake-up, and I realized that brown belts are just ordinary people—who work hard and have a very strong reason to avoid messing up.

But my impression of the superheroes was reinforced as I watched people I knew undergo some mys-

terious change during their testing and emerge with great power and great responsibility, as if they'd been bitten by a radioactive spider.

The thought that I might one day undergo the same filled me with apprehension.

Then I tested.

Ouch.

What an eye-opener.



The Sensei Paloses award Daniel Midkiff his black belt.

I haven't bathed in strange chemicals. I haven't been struck by lightning. But there is a change.

My impression is different now that I'm on the other side. It's not one I can put into words. You'll just have to take my word for it—it's amazing.

My advice to every kyu? Be the best YOU you can be.

If you're a white belt, don't yearn to be a yellow belt. Set the standard for white belts in the kai, doing the best you can, where you are with what you have. You will surprise yourself.

## Karate lessons ingrained in new sho dan's heart

The lessons that I have learned through karate have forever been ingrained in my heart—lessons like staying calm in the face of adversity and persevering through pain. Expecting nothing, yet prepared for anything.

I have learned to dig deep and give it everything I have, and then give more. I have learned to always fight hard and love even harder. I strive with the heart of a warrior, even at the times that I am most afraid.

I have learned to walk with tenacity more fierce than the tiger on my patch—and yet, my gentleness is even stronger.

My training has elevated me

to a level of self-awareness and realization that I never thought was possible. And the black belt around my waist reminds me that all things are possi-

ble to him that believes. (Philippians 4:13)

—Andrew Black  
Sho Dan



Kyoshi Shihan awards Andrew Black his black belt at the shiai.



## TIKK's third sho dan ho in history describes journey

By SHANE MURRAY  
Sho Dan Ho

I did not start karate with the intention of getting a black belt. I started only because my brothers did it. I was indifferent about karate for the first several years of my training and then eventually I began to start enjoying it.

Karate started to change my life in many ways physically, mentally and emotionally. But most importantly, it had changed my character to allow me to be the person I am supposed to—that God had created me to be.

My journey towards black belt has been a long and difficult one. Just after the Gasshuku in March, I heard about my fellow ik kyus testing for sho dan so I became focused on how I could help them as I was the highest ranking brown belt who was not going to test. I started asking the ik kyus how I could lead the brown belts in the future if they all succeed in their testing in August.

Then two weeks before the shiai during a Saturday class, Shihan told me that I was officially testing for junior black belt. I left in surprise and started studying at a faster rate the minute I got home. Those two weeks still were not nearly enough to even prepare me the slightest for my testing. No matter who you are or how much you prepare, you cannot just go through testing at ease.

On my first day of testing I had no idea of what to expect except that I knew it was going to be one of the hardest things in my life, and that is exactly what it was. One of the hardest parts for me was the morning after testing when I had to be at school at 6:15 a.m for a cross country run after



Renshi Maria Kristensen assists Shane Murray with his new belt.

staying up until midnight the night before. Then right after the run I would have to experience the first days of my freshman year in high school followed by a two-hour marching band rehearsal.

Testing was the hardest experience of my life, mentally,

*“Testing was the hardest  
experience of my life,  
mentally, physically and  
emotionally.”*

physically and emotionally. Even though I did not like what the black belts made me do during that week, I really do appreciate what they did for me—from giving up their time each night to losing some sleep and for taking me out Saturday morning to the VFW.

I would like to thank all the black belts for their support during this part of my training, and for the training that is still to come.

I also want to thank Shihan for the things he has done. He always has something important to say. I also thought it was awesome that he would always have something creative to do, such as being the Big Elf in the Christmas parade.

I would like to thank Renshi and Sensei Harris because they have been my teachers from day one. I still remember when Renshi showed me my first punch, and when I showed mine. These two pushed me along through the path of perfecting my character, and the path to become a junior black belt.

The one thing I really remember them saying was the three-time rule. When someone pushes you around at school, you tell a teacher, adult or parents three times. If the adults do not do anything about it, then you get the chance hit back, but not too hard.

I really liked the enthusiasm that Renshi had teaching when I was a child, and I still like it now that I am one of her junior black belts.

## New student breaks longtime habit, begins anew at TIKK

By **STEVE SUMNERS**  
White Belt

**S**teve Sumners of the Denton dojo has a message for you. Don't smoke! Don't even start!

I left home in Tennessee when I was 19 after enlisting into the United States Army. Shortly thereafter I was influenced by others to smoke cigarettes. It was the "cool" thing to do. So, of course, being the young and inexperienced adult, I succumbed to peer pressure and my 26-year relationship with cigarettes began.

I made it through 20 years in the Army including being deployed to the first Gulf War, Desert Shield and Desert Storm and smoking hardly slowed me down. They even sent me to an Infantry Regiment as my last duty station.

I retired from the Army in 2002 still smoking. Once I retired, the physical activity I was used to was no longer there. At first I was very happy about this. No more getting up at 4 a.m. and waking up my soldiers for a wonderful morning of physical training, but little did I know how important it was.

In late 2008 I began having respiratory problems. I shook it off for months, but it would not go away. I would go to bed at night and simply could not breathe correctly. I knew I had to stop smoking. I went to my family doctor and he took some radiographs to assess my situation. I had pneumonia and my lungs were in bad shape.

I smoked a pack of cigarettes a day. That is 20 cigarettes. That's just about one an hour for 26 years. After all those years, I stopped smoking in three days. Unbelievable! I quit on January 6, 2009.

As I write this, it is six months later. I have not

cheated and have remained faithful to my conviction of staying away from cigarettes. It is very difficult and I still have urges to smoke. It's a battle almost every day.

Now I was ready for some physical activity. I always wanted to try karate, but simply just never did. Now was my chance. I did a tremendous amount of research on the internet before I jumped into anything. Finally, I visited the Denton dojo and decided to take up Senseis Tina and Tony Palos' offer of a free first lesson.

I thought this was a great idea and Isshinryu was on the top of my list. It seemed to be the style that I most wanted to learn. I've been a member of the Denton dojo since April. I am very, very, sore, but I am also very thankful that I have the opportunity to be so very sore.

Still, six months after quitting smoking, my lungs are not completely healed, but I can tell there is a difference. I can take deeper breaths, my senses of taste and smell have magnified.

Oh the smell of walking through an area where someone was smoking! That was me. I smelt horrible and did not even know it.

If you are thinking about smoking, remember this story, please. I have saved about a thousand dollars so far this year by not smoking. Now I can afford the opportunities Isshinryu Karate offers.

If you already smoke, STOP! You have to have a reason to stop and that reason must be very personal and meaningful to you. My reason was for my wife Susan and my daughter Syndi.

My relationship with cigarettes is now gone. I now have a new relationship with myself and Isshinryu karate. Let the journey begin my friends!

### *Karate and Your Health... The Doctor's Orders*

Is regular exercise good for you?

Is having self confidence based on real personal achievement good for you?

Is self discipline good for you?

Is a smoke-free, drug free, environment free of hazardous chemicals and toxic waste good for you?

Is being surrounded by

positive thinking people good for you?

Is the opportunity to challenge yourself and compete, regardless of your age, good for you?

Is the opportunity to train with real masters—ones who have dedicated their lives to karate and are willing to share their inspiration and art—is that good for you?

Is stress reduction good for you?

Is working toward the perfection of your character good for you?

Is karate good for you?  
YES!

—*Steve Gellman, Ni Dan and family physician for 25 years*

## KNOW YOUR BLACK BELTS

## Mr. Mike Harper

**KARATE**

**Rank:** sho dan.

**I first started doing karate:** in November 1999

**I first started doing karate because:** a friend asked me to try it. He ultimately quit.

**The thing that has kept me doing karate has been:** the conditioning, self improvement, friendships, competition and the quality of TIKK.

**I achieved my sho dan on:** April 13, 2008 with the "Six Pack."

**My favorite kata is:** probably Seiuchin, but also Wansu.

**My favorite karate drill is:** panther crawls (just kidding.)

**My least favorite karate drill/exercise is:** panther crawls (not kidding.)

**The one thing Shihan has taught me that has had the most impact on my life is:** you can accomplish more than you think if you don't give up. Keep trying.

**To me, karate is:** more than punches and kicks. It's a mindset, a way of life, relationships, conditioning, learning, confidence and



a journey that doesn't end.

**My most memorable karate experience is:** no doubt, black belt testing with the "Six Pack."

**My goal in karate this year is:** to improve my katas.

**PERSONAL**

**Nickname:** Mad Dog.

**Birth date and place:** February 13, 1951 (just a pup) in Dallas.

**Occupation:** chemical sales and hazardous waste disposal.

**Family:** none—divorced and parents and sister have passed away.

**I live in:** Grand Prairie.

**My favorite pastime or hobby besides karate is:** golf, motorcycling, outdoor stuff.

**The three words people use to describe me are:** loyal, dependable and a great dancer.

**I wish I knew how to:** speak Spanish.

**I'm most proud of:** being a patriotic American.

**My favorite restaurant is:** Three Forks.

**I'm happiest when:** I'm with friends but don't mind being alone.

**My goal in life this year is to:** continue enjoying life and friends.

## Gillham...

(From Page 1)  
training at TIKK since 2004, took it one step further and decided to serve the country himself. Austin, who graduated from Coppell High School in June, spent 13 weeks this summer in intensive basic training in the Marine Corps.

On Sept. 18, he graduated from U.S. Marine Corps Boot

Camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and was a member of the honor platoon.

After a brief visit home and slipping in a few classes at TIKK as well, he then went to Camp Pendleton in California for military combat training where he was an honor graduate ranking fifth out of 300 in his class..

The private first class officer then traveled to Maryland for military specialty school where he will be until February.

Austin's father, Alan, said, "While he will finish in Maryland and become a reservist in February, he seems to be enjoying himself so much that he may go active while squeezing in college."

## SENSEI'S CORNER

The Christmas season is almost here and the new year is already knocking! Make every moment count in every aspect of your life!! Here's to wishing you and your family happiness today and always.

—*Renshi Maria Kristensen*

I find that the older I get the more important it is to stretch and exercise to keep the body limber and prevent injury.

During the (Isshin-Ryu) Hall of Fame Tournament, we were called away from the floor because a fire alarm had gone off. Larry and I were hanging out with Hanshi (William H.) Duessel and the majority of people were exiting on the escalator rather than the stairs.

We asked Hanshi what he would prefer. He said he'd rather take the stairs. To quote Hanshi he said, "The more steps you take, the more steps you can take." I thought that was very profound.

I find it very enlightening when I see older, experienced people keeping up with their daily sports activities even while dealing with aches and pains in knee braces, tennis elbow, sore back and shoulders. They just keep on going, like the "Energizer Bunny."

I want to be like that and know it can only happen if I keep doing something positive for my body on a daily basis.

—*Sensei Jeannie Rupp*

The holidays usually mean lots of irregular schedules, rich foods and extra traveling. These can all cause stress or illness. I want to encourage everyone to take the time for your karate every day, even if it is only five minutes.

It is amazing how jolly and healthy you will feel after going through kata. A few minutes of Isshinryu in the morning will keep you calm and swift during the hectic season. So, my holiday wish is for you all is to kick and punch your way to a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

—*Sensei Tina Palos*

In class, your focus and attention should be on your karate. Every technique thrown or takedown should be on the invisible person in front of you. LITTLE THINGS MAKE BIG THINGS HAPPEN. Take control of your life. Translate your karate into daily living. Stand erect with your head up and shoulders back. Good posture will pay off in the long run.

—*Sensei Tommy Thomas*

This year Kyoshi joined all of his fellow black belts from the Jersey Judo Karate Kai to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Shihan (Dale) Jenkins' passing. They didn't dwell on his passing, but celebrated his life and legacy.

It was the first time in 25 years that all of these people had reunited. This shows that the impact Shihan Jenkins had continues to this day. It's important to remember where we came from (the past,) but we can't worry about changing it.

Hopefully we learn from it. We can think about the future and plan for it and set goals, but if we worry about what hasn't happened yet, we forget about the moment we are in. If we spend our time thinking about "could've would've should've" (the regrets of the past) or worrying about "what if" (fear of the future,) we lose what's really important—"what is."

That's a lot of wasted energy! This past year there were a lot of worries about the future because of the economy, jobs, our health, war. It's perfectly natural to worry. It's not easy to let go, but God is in control. Only he knows the future. Think of where we are now, and let's be thankful for what we have.

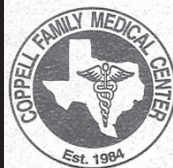
—*Sensei Tony Palos*

Focus on the important things in life before time takes it away. Times are stressful for a lot of people right now. When you have the opportunity to do the things that you love, do it. Spend time with people you love.

I love karate also. It's healthy for my mind and my body. I have to make time for karate; it's a part of me. Each person has his or her own journey—make it quality. Take care of your health as time is all that we have.

—*Sensei Susan Harris*

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