

TKFI/MATC Christmas Party

December 22, Grants Pass Golf Course, Grants Pass, Oregon USA

The Northwest Carolers, directed by Sean McKee from Illinois Valley High School, began the evening's festivities for the annual TKFI/MATC Christmas Party, singing some delightful Christmas songs (A cappella).

Tony Mendonca Shihan, our vibrant MC for the evenings program, welcomed some 118 students, families and guests, to our annual TKFI/MATC Christmas Party, a great time to enjoy each others company and to lift everyone's Christmas spirits.

Special guests included Shihan Dwight Grover (Virginia), Shihan Ceci Cheung (Oregon Health & Science University), Shihan Tony and Dr. Brandi Mendonca (McMinnville), Matt Collins, US Army Special Forces (Okinawa), Sgt. Glenn Uemura, Army Special Forces veteran (Hawaii), and SMSgt Bruce Kates, Retired Drill Instructor US Marines, (Williams), and Santa & Mrs. Claus (North Pole).

At different times of the program, names were randomly drawn for a chance to spin the "Wheel of Fortune". Winners won beautiful hand-blown glass ornaments, vases and plates from the Glass forge, Silver rounds and Cash.



The Northwest Carolers, led by Sean McKee, welcomed everyone with their melodic Christmas carols.



Mr. and Mrs. Claus flew in from the North Pole to bring many smiles to, especially, our youngsters.

After the pledge of allegiance and singing of America The Beautiful, Soke thanked God in prayer for the many blessings bestowed upon our organization this past year.

Dinner was delicious including ham, turkey, fresh steamed vegetables, mashed potatoes, and dessert. Organized by owner Rob Androy his staff (Robin Swandburg, Sarah Brickey, Joy Pierce, Sara & Chino) did a fine job preparing and serving the meal.

During dinner, Dwight Grover Shihan, the Gattley family and Asia Kearney sang “Drummer Boy”. Nedd Wyant entertained us with his banjo, David Hawkyard belted out “76 Trumbones” and Saito Soke sang “Lady”.



Shihan Dwight Grover accompnys the Gattley children and Asia Kearney with the “Drummer Boy”.



Nedd Wyant gives it a go with his banjo plucking, Grants Pass style.

Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus, who flew all the way from the North Pole, treated us with a few Elvis and Christmas songs. Families were invited to take a photo with Santa, compliments of Robert and Amanda Bird.

After a few more “Wheel of Fortune” participants spun the wheel for their prizes, “Mr. Fabulous”, a Las Vegas entertainer, took the stage and sang, “You Make Me Feel So Young”, “The Lady is a Tramp” and “That’s Life”. With stage lights and cordless mike in hand, Mr. Fabulous engaged with the audience and warmed their Christmas spirit. (See him at The Mr Fabulous Variety Show on YouTube).

Soke Saito, Tony Mendonca Shihan, Ceci Cheung Shihan and Robert Burstein Shidojin then presented TKFI awards to those deserving of recognition for their outstanding service, commitment and vision.

“Military appreciation Award”

This award is to recognize and thank our servicemen and women for preserving our freedom. We thank them for their service, their sacrifice, and their commitment, while remembering that they need us to stand with them, and their families, while they are standing guard for us. We must continue to do our best for them, as they give their all for freedom. Among the recipients were Matt Collins Sensei, Glenn Uemura and Bruce Kates. Sensei Matt is presently serving with the US Army Special Forces based in Okinawa. Glenn and Bruce are both Purple Heart recipients who served during the Vietnam conflict.



Sensei Matt Collins is honored for his service in our Armed Forces. He is presently with the Army Special Forces stationed in Okinawa.

“Warrior Fighting Spirit Award”

TKFI recognizes students who have demonstrated a fighting spirit and have continued to train no matter how difficult classes were. Certificates were presented to those members who demonstrated commitment and inspired others to engage in training on a regular basis. Among the recipients present were Logan Mendonca, Gabriel Wyant, Jonah Horban, Noah Horban, Rita Zhao, Leo Zhao, Jack Banta, Ehukai Gill-Miner, Tim Short, Albert Galvan, Sarah McKee, Alexa Barnes, Grant Bohannon, Elise Gattey, Andreas Gattey, Edgar Salinas, Ida Manuel, Natalie Chavez, Cole Barnes, Dean Martin Bird, Steven Rotter, Collette Rotter, Amanda Packard, and Angelo Adame.

“Outstanding Service Award”

TKFI and the Martial Arts Training Center has a proud tradition of service and recognizes Instructors, students and friends who continue their commitment in helping others which helps foster a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility. This year’s recipients went to Chuck Aoto Sensei (Kendo & Karate), Shant Palanjian Sensei (Aikido), Nancy Iannios Sensei (Holy Yoga), Joel Lovingfoss (Web Master), Misty Hamilton (Staff), Cece McKee (Staff), Greg Bock (Mr. Karaoke), Amanda Hamilton (Assistant), Ken Khosroabadi (Iran connection), Pirouz Pirnia (Iran coordinator), and Glen & Leslie Parks (Grocery Outlet).

“Outstanding Parents Award” to recognize parents who have supported our cause in promoting excellence in citizenship, character and honor. This year’s recipients included Mark & Sabine Gattey, Amanda and Robert Bird, Kay Hamilton, and Mary & Lee Thornton.

“Distinguished Alumni Award”

This is the second year that TKFI is presenting this special recognition. There are those who are not able to attend our classes on a regular basis due to university studies, military service or work, that continue to contribute their time and energy whenever possible in support of our mission. Our distinguished alumnis include Sensei Matt Collins (US Army Special Forces), Quintyn Fazio Senpai (College of the Wooster), and Emmett Burstein (Oregon State University)

“Shihansha Award”.

This award recognizes members for outstanding leadership, faithfulness, vision and outstanding citizenship in preserving Saito-Ha Shito-ryu Karate-do. They are our golden compass who points the way for our members to maintain a steadfast course and pointed in the right direction. This year’s recipients are Tony Mendonca Shihan (Oregon), Joan Gombau Shihan (Catalonia), Ceci Cheung Shihan (Oregon), Giovanni Granados Shihan (Virginia), Hajime Ide Kaicho (Brazil), Ragunathan Kaysavan Shihan (India), Amir Mahdavi Shihan (Iran), Eduardo Manabu Ide Sensei (Brazil), Alessandra Galbiati (Brazil), Liz Satriano Sensei (Virginia), Hamed Zafaranlu Sensei (Iran), Francesco Arabi Sensei (Italy), Alessandra Arabi Sensei (Italy), Sofia Parada Sensei (Chile), Jim Hamilton Sensei (Oregon), Robert Burstein Shido-in (Oregon), Julie Lee Shido-in (Oregon), Chuck Aoto Sensei (Oregon), Chuck Overstreet Sensei (Oregon), Seth Von Eggers (Oregon), Sam Manuel Sensei (Oregon), Tony Altieri Sensei (California), Kim Williamson Sensei (California), John Isabelo Sensei (Hawaii)

“Outstanding Student of the Year Award”

This award recognizes those students who have gone the extra mile, and especially for their display for excellence, contribution to society and leadership among their peers. They have endured mental, physical and moral challenges and have demonstrated the kind of inner drive to be the best they can be while expanding the possibilities to ensure a commitment to success. Their principles of dedication, honor and discipline have inspired others to reach their goals. Congratulations to Asia Kearney, Brian Banta, Nedd Wyant, Ken Frownfelter, Dr. Carlos Marchini, Michele Barnes, David Hawkyard, Victoria Fuqua, Emmett Burstein, Sebastian Gattey, and Matthias Gattey.

“Athlete of the Year Award”.

This award goes to the most Outstanding Athlete representing TKFI in their country. Gerard Gombau (Catalonia), Azzurra Lucidi (Italy), Sunisa Chanyaputhipong (USA), Baylee Spencer (USA), Jason Stanley (USA), Joel Clark (USA), and Marita Grover (USA).

“Instructor of the Year Award”

This award goes to some of our distinguished Senseis for outstanding service, positive example and diligent effort in teaching Saito-Ha Shito-ryu Karate-do. Their dedication,

wisdom and encouragement exemplifies what is expected of all TKFI International instructors. Among this year's recipients are Shihan Ubiratan Souza de Lima (Brazil), Tony Mendonca Shihan (USA), Dwight Grover Shihan (USA), Jim Hamilton Sensei (USA) and Robert Burstein Shidojin (USA).

“International TKFI Oscar Award”

This is the most prestigious Karate-do award of the Traditional Karate-do Federation International. This special person is recognized for demonstrating the highest level of budo spirit and honors Karate practitioners for outstanding contributions to TKFI and to the art of Saito-Ha Shito-Ryu Karate-Do. It is the premier award of the TKFI and recognizes the recipient's drive towards service, perfection of character, hard work in Karate training, and the willingness to constantly help others in their quest for excellence. Nominations are made by any of our branch instructors throughout the world, and then voted on by our past winners. Our past Oscar recipients are Jim Hamilton Sensei, Matt Collins Sensei, Jaime Madsen, Kelleen Silveira, Robert Burstein, Misty Hamilton, Ubiratan de Souza Lima Shihan and Tony Mendonca Shihan. The winner for this year has devoted numerous hours in coordinating, organizing, directing and hosting students and families while finding ways to increase membership, keeping families happy, and making sure all the business affairs are attended to. This special person also continues to train and have been an inspiration to all of our members. This year's International TKFI Oscar Award was presented to Liz Satriano Sensei from Virginia.

Congratulations to all of our dedicated recipients!

After a few more spins from the wheel and the annual gift exchange, Debbie began the “Open Karaoke” session. Dancing was also led by Al Galvin and Quintyn Fazio.

As all good things must also come to a close, everyone shared their positive comments and left with many smiles on their faces.

Another year is coming to a close and the fun and fellowship of this year's Christmas party is surely to keep our spirits and focus throughout the new year.

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!



Sensei Chuck Aoto and Brian Banta enjoys the festivities with their family.



Mark and Sabine Gattey and family, always supportive, and honored with the "Parents of the Year" award.



Shihan Tony Mendonca and Robert Bursein Shido always having time to share true friendship.



Ken Frownfelter Senpai always brings a bit of enthusiasm and warmth to our events.



Always nice to see the smiles from Kristen, Misty, Janie and Emmett.



Leo and Rita Zhao are always quiet and polite and are upcoming stars of Karate-do.



McKenzie Mendonca is full of life and joy to everyone, especially to grandpa Soke.



A family that trains together stays happy, and you can see it in Isaac, Dr. Collette and Steven Rotter's eyes.