

TEACHING KARATE- & So Much More

By Kevin Gould

During pretty much every class at Wattie Karate, there is a single teaching mantra that presides above all else: Slow down, concentrate and practice. It is an instruction for karate, but also for so much more.

“I tell my students that this works for karate, for math, reading and writing, playing piano and anything else they can think of,” says Renshi Dave Wattie, owner of Wattie Karate.

“All of my students have heard this at nearly every single class. I frequently break it down to, slow down so that you have time to concentrate while you practice.

Wattie Karate has classes in Cornwall and Winchester, focusing on traditional training through respect and discipline, while maintaining a family atmosphere.

“Our dedicated instructors have decades of experience, a passion for teaching and a drive for excellence,” says Dave. “Wattie Karate has classes

for all ranks and all ages, insisting on small class sizes and a lot of fun . . . and a bit of shouting.”

Dave started training in karate as a youngster, around 1995, and started as an instructor in 2003. He has run multiple schools in Canada and the United States over the years.

Wherever and whenever he has run the schools, the philosophy has remained constant.

“I want my program to be accessible to as many as possible, financially,” he says. “I work hard to keep costs as low as I can. While I have run classes of over 100 students with a team of instructors side-by-side, at Wattie Karate I keep class sizes small so that I can give individual attention to each student.”

Seeing students progress is one of the best parts of the business for Dave.

“When they are finally able to do the really hard kick, or when a special move finally clicks, I feel most proud of my students in those moments, when they realize that they can, and should, be proud of themselves,” he says. “They hold their head high, and I am nothing but proud of them - it’s a great moment.”

It’s a sport where discipline is paramount, but there’s also room for fun, and plenty of it.

“One thing that is tricky to develop as an instructor is the ability to maintain respect and authority, while still being silly sometimes,” says Dave. “There’s a time for silly and there’s a time for serious. Teaching this to adults is easy, youngsters are usually harder. Eventually everyone figures it out, and then they help me to lead the next group of new students that come in.

Dave and his wife Danielle have three children – two daughters (Harmony, 10, and Levie, 2 and “going on 20” according to dad) and a son (Hunter, 6).

Both Harmony and Hunter take Karate classes with their dad. Harmony has a blue belt, and often serves as Dave’s assistant, and Hunter is an orange belt.



The family also has what Dave calls “a pile of pets.” There’s a husky (Zuki), three cats (Kai, Ronald and Ginney), a tarantula (Kitty), and a couple of snakes. Dave’s snake is a four-foot ball python (Hydra), and Harmony has a three-foot ghost corn snake (Phantom). “Plus we have some fish,” says Dave.

It’s very much a family business, with Harmony and Hunter often involved when Dave is teaching. “My oldest (Harmony) is there with me for all of my classes,” says Dave. “She is sometimes a pain, as all 10-year-olds can be, but she is always there for me and ready to help when I need her – in class or at home. The best moments are those unplanned, simple times we all laugh at something silly and quirky. I get to bring my family with me to karate, where all become a bigger family together.”

Giving back to the community is important to Dave, and he is involved in numerous local endeavours.

“I am involved in a number of charity organizations, and am very passionate about them all,” he says. One in particular is Camp Kagama – a children’s sleep away summer camp that has been around since 1936 just outside of Ingleside. Dave has been volunteering there in many capacities for decades.

“The best way to learn and grow is to start a conversation,” he says. “Reach out and let’s talk. Whether you want to take classes, see if it’s a good fit - for you, a child, grandchild, friend of a friend, whomever - or you want to get some support for a community function - reach out!”

WattieKarate.ca
Kids Classes & Adult Classes
Cornwall & Winchester
(613) 703-2919