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Harding Fine Arts Academy Martial Arts Team Produce World Champions

Oklahoma City- Members of the Harding Fine Arts Academy (HFAA) Martial Arts team travelled to Massa, Italy to compete at the Martial Arts Unified World Championships. Over 100 countries were represented at the event held October 25th-30th.

Five HFAA student team members and two coaches, Jennifer and Anthony Allman qualified to compete at the World Championships by placing in the top three of their divisions at the 2016 International Sports Karate Association (ISKA) U.S. Open Tournament held in Florida this past summer.

Medaling in Italy were HFAA Sophomore **Vien Schmelzenbach** with a Silver medal in Weapons, Bronze medal in Point Sparring, Bronze medal in Kubudo Weapons and a Bronze medal in Traditional Intermediate Karate; Senior **Mireya Sanchez** with a Bronze medal in Traditional Forms and a Bronze medal in Traditional Weapons; Sophomore **Emily Alvarez-Hamilton** won a Gold medal in Girls Beginning Karate; Coach **Jennifer Allman** earned a Gold medal in 30+ Womens Black Belt Traditional Form, a Gold medal in 30+ Womens Black Belt Traditional Weapons and a Bronze medal in Womens Shotokan Karate. Coach **Anthony Allman** earned a Bronze medal in Mens Kumite.

When asked about their experience overseas, Coach Jennifer Allman said, "This tournament was the most rewarding karate experience any of us have ever had, it was life changing!"



The Harding Fine Arts Academy Martial Arts team, whose ages range from 14 to 18, competes in a wide variety of martial arts divisions including Weapons where a kata is performed using a weapon, Sparring, CMX (Creative, Musical and eXtreme) and the Forms division which is a kata with a choreographed set of moves that are performed. The program, established in 2010, has so far produced 3 black belts and 25 brown belts and numerous other belts.

"Some schools offer martial arts as an after-school activity, but to my knowledge we stand alone in making it available for school credit," Allman said. "Since there are no other high school teams, the Harding martial arts team competes against private clubs in tournaments across the state, region, country and now world!" she said.

Harding Fine Arts Academy is an Oklahoma City charter school that prepares high school students for college in an academically challenging, arts-integrated environment and has recently been named a 2015 Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

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