

Regional karate training held locally

Recreation Report

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By Earl Hodges

Contributing writer

The St. Bernard Parish Recreation Department recently hosted its first USA Southern Regional grassroots inner club karate training.

The session was held Aug. 28 at the St. Bernard club's training facility at the former Archbishop Hannan High School site in Meraux.

A total of 15 karate students from the St. Bernard program and a dojo in Picayune, Miss., participated in the training, which was conducted by Darrell Goodyear, who heads up the St. Bernard program and is also the assistant director for the National USA Grassroots Karate Program.

"The grassroots program is designed to take young athletes, ages 12 to 17, from the club level of training to an elite level," Goodyear said. "What is unique about this program is that we not only bring in the athletes, we also bring in the coaches and teach them the most advanced training methods so they can take it back to their schools."

Each year, a national camp is held where some of the best karate coaches in the world coach and teach young athletes, said Goodyear, 52, who holds a fifth-degree black belt in Shotokan karate and has been teaching karate in St. Bernard for 35 years.

In 2008 and 2009 the camps were held at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. However, this year's camp drew more than 200 athletes and had to move to the University of the Pacific in northern California to accommodate the large number.

"We hope that the athletes we work with in the grassroots program will be able to attend the national camp next year," Goodyear said.

Later this year, Goodyear said, he hopes the St. Bernard program can host another grassroots inner club training and "bring in more schools to participate."

The grassroots training sessions also helps prepare karate students for upcoming competition in tournaments, Goodyear added.

The St. Bernard program is open to ages 6 through adults.

For more information about the karate program, call Goodyear at 504.301.9601.

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