

DENISE MORGAN

JUDO ALBERTA VOLUNTEER PROFILE

What is your favorite event to volunteer at?

Again, I have two:

1st - 2014 Alberta Winter Games held in Canmore; I was part of the Local Organizing Committee. Financially, it was a tough year for Canmore, we had the 'flood' just prior and were told to do our best to make it memorable but had little to no funds. I had a parent that made a donation and said to do something special - I arranged for Sumo Suits. The Coaches went head-to-head, North vs South; the athletes were the referees making all the calls. This event was held at lunch time; spectators didn't leave they wanted to watch 'the show'. Colton Hall saw a broadcast of the event, drove from Edmonton to Canmore the next day, paid admission just so he could get in the suit. The next day, the kids were chanting 'We want the suits, we want the suits'.

I also made name tags for the water bottles which had the logo and inspirational quote and their name written in Japanese so they would know what it would look like when they got their black belt. I still see some of those tags hooked to their gym bags.

It was also the start of the Judo Toques. I made one for each member of the team.

2nd - The Canmore Inter-Provincial Training Camp. Terry and I are so heavily involved with the organization of this event. I love seeing our western provinces come together and I particularly love seeing the new attendees coming and seeing what we do to make this camp so special. It's a lot of work, but it is so worth it. To us, all of the athletes have worked so hard during their competitive year to get ready for Nationals and we're honored that we get to have them for the weekend and spoil them a little bit before the big event.

We've developed friendships with the coaches and even get to have a little fun with them on the Friday night. The reception is a new part of the camp. We've gotten to know their appetites and we even have a few surprises for them each year.

What are the top three things you would tell someone who is interested in volunteering?

Start small, don't take on a big role. Commit to what you have time for. Try different roles; find out which ones you like and you don't like. You might be surprised by the ones you like. Listen and learn, take each role as an opportunity to learn and become a stronger member of a larger team.

Do you volunteer for other events, clubs or organizations outside of judo?

Yes - When called upon by our community we help wherever and whenever we can. We've been involved with a lot of fundraising events - Daycare in Lake Louise, Lions Club and Individuals.

One of the most touching events was a few years back - McKenzie's Assistant Hockey Coach passed away unexpectedly, leaving behind his wife and 3 young boys. As a community, we needed to do something. A core group got together to put together a fundraiser, that took place 10 days after his passing. At the end of the night we raised over \$50K for this family. It allowed them the time to grieve and figure out what to do next.

What are your future goals?

Retiring in the next 5 years. We bought a cottage 2 years ago in Sylvan Lake as part of our retirement plan. We love gardening and our cottage will be amazing. We're looking at ways of making it as 'green' as possible and have made a list of improvements to be done each year in preparation to our moving there. We also plan on travelling for at least 6 months before we move. Travel plans include - Canada coast to coast and then abroad.