



ALFOND YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTER



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### AYCC Instructor Honored with Prestigious International Martial Arts Award

**Waterville, Maine – September 12, 2025** – The Alfond Youth & Community Center (AYCC) proudly celebrates **Shihan Craig Sargent**, head instructor of Club Naha Karate-Do USA at the AYCC, who continues to bring international recognition to Central Maine through his lifelong dedication to martial arts.

Recently, Shihan Craig was awarded the distinguished **G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time) Martial Arts Award and Ring** at the prestigious G.O.A.T. Martial Arts Awards Banquet in Texas – one of the highest honors in the martial arts world, according to the *Windsor Star*.

The G.O.A.T. Award recognizes martial artists who embody exceptional skill, lifelong dedication, and profound contributions to their communities. Nominees are put forward by their peers and evaluated by a Grand Masters Council on their merit, legacy, and embodiment of **Kaizen** – the lifelong pursuit of growth and improvement.

Shihan Craig has been involved in the AYCC's karate program since **1992**, guiding generations of students that extend far beyond the dojo. His teaching emphasizes respect, perseverance, discipline, and community – values that leave a lasting impact on hundreds of local youth & families.

This award follows a remarkable series of recent milestones:

- **August 2025** – Shihan Craig was presented with his **red belt** by his instructor, Shihan Javier Diaz. In the Shudokan tradition, the red belt may be awarded at 7<sup>th</sup> Dan to honor a senior instructor's deep commitment to preserving and passing on the art.
- **September 2025** – He was officially **nominated for induction to the AFKA Hall of Fame**, under the category of *Lifetime of Honor Award*. This recognition reflects the samurai tenet of *Meiyo* (Honor), celebrating a lifetime dedicated to the practice, teaching, and preservation of karate.

Reflecting on his international honor, Shihan Craig shared:

“I am truly honored and grateful to receive the G.O.A.T. Award. It represents not just my journey, but also the students, instructors, and community who inspire me every day. I will continue to live out the spirit of Kaizen in my training, teaching, and life.”

The AYCC invites the community to join in congratulating Shihan Craig on these extraordinary achievements and to celebrate the lasting impact of his more than three decades of leadership in martial arts. To learn more about Shihan Craig and his journey, please visit our website, here:

<https://www.clubaycc.org/programs/youth/martial-arts/>

**For media inquiries, interview requests, or additional information, please contact:**

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### **About the Alfond Youth & Community Center**

The Alfond Youth & Community Center (AYCC) is the 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that operates the nation’s only merged Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCA. Located in Central Maine, the dedicated staff of the 85,000-square-foot facility serves over 9,000 members from throughout the 50 communities of the Greater Waterville area.

A true youth and community center, the AYCC boasts childcare and afterschool programs, wellness, fitness, athletics, aquatics, martial arts, and summer camps.

[www.clubaycc.org](http://www.clubaycc.org)

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