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**NEWSLETTER / NEWS RELEASE**  
**From the Office of the Mayor**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FEBRUARY 15, 2018**

**FLORISSANT CIVIC CENTER JUDO STUDENTS  
ATTEND TOURNAMENT IN JAPAN!**



**Pictured above are Sensei Eiko Shepherd, Judo Students Arianna Gaines, Cornel Childs and Lucas Tatar**

The Florissant Civic Center is home base for the KiTo Kan Judo Club led by Sensei (teacher) Eiko Saito Shepherd, 8th Dan from Japan.

Judo is an Olympic sport that originated in Japan in 1882. It was started by an educator, Dr. Jigoro Kano, as a way to become strong both mentally and physically.

At the Florissant Civic Center classes are taught for both juniors and adults from beginners to advanced players. Students frequently compete nationally and internationally. One student is currently training with the goal of qualifying for the 2020 USA Olympic Judo team. Sensei Shepherd also has a special program to encourage junior students to do well in their school classrooms.

In December four junior judo players were invited by a Japanese Judo Organization, Sanix and the United States Judo Federation to compete in the 2017 Junior High School World Championship held in Fukuoka, Japan.

On December 21st judo students, Cornel Childs Jr., Arianna Gaines, Sereniti Steward and Lucas Tatar flew to Japan accompanied by their coach, Eiko Saito Shepherd and parent Dr. Lonetta Oliver.

The St. Louis delegation received a warm welcome upon their arrival in Japan. Several hundred students arrived from all over the world. For two days students participated in a training seminar conducted by former Judo Olympians from Japan. Students met and practiced with students from 11 different countries and participated in the team competition. They represented the United States with talent, courage, and good sportsmanship.

Another wonderful part of the trip was a visit to a middle school in Nagoya. The faculty and students had prepared various cultural activities for our students to enjoy. They learned how to make Japanese rice cakes, participate in a traditional Japanese tea ceremony, brush writing, and origami. The Japanese students were eager to practice their ability to speak English with our students.

Sensei Shepherd commented "Since returning from Japan our students Judo skills are greatly improved and their maturity has grown as well. I am glad we went over there. This trip was priceless. Our students learned so much about Judo Japanese culture and themselves. I would like to thank the Florissant Civic Center for providing us practice space where children can develop positive values and have such incredible experiences."

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