

Rumble in the Rockies

Denver ARC officer wins first place at recent martial arts competition.



Left to right: Nicole Hoogstad, Ashley Hoogstad and Major Sylvia Hoogstad Photo by Major Erik Hoogstad



Major Sylvia Hoogstad of the Denver ARC not only likes to “rumble,” but is pretty good at it; she won first place in her division in forms at the recent “Rumble in the Rockies” competition in Aurora, Colo.

“Forms are ancient fighting patterns that have been passed down for thousands of years,” said Karen Eden Herdman, program director at the Denver Red Shield. “Having good snap and focus are keys to winning in this category. Major Hoogstad has only been training in martial arts for a few months. It’s definitely a sign of how good she will get as she continues to train.”

Hoogstad earned a yellow belt in the Red Shield Warriors martial arts program, which Herdman originated and has taught at the Denver Red Shield for the past 11 years. The program has even spread to Salvation Army corps across the U.S. and in Canada.

“We are a Christian martial arts program,” Herdman said. “All of our instructors sign off on our articles of faith, which state that we believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Hoogstad trains with her husband, Major Erik Hoogstad, and their four children. Daughter Nicole took second place in her division in forms, and daughter Ashley received a medal for her participation.

Herdman has promoted six black belts since starting the program in 2000. The first corps officer to be promoted to the rank of black belt was Major Carole Abella, now the corps officer with her husband, Major Daniel Abella, at the Bakersfield (Calif.) Corps. She and her four children were among the first of Herdman’s students and were all promoted to black belt in 2004.

For more information on the Red Shield Warriors martial arts program visit redshielddenver.org.