

## Aurora's Charisma Toupin wins Gold Medal at Karate Canada National Championships in Alberta

Aurora resident Charisma Toupin captured the gold medal in Cadets Female Kata at the Karate Canada National Championships last week in Edmonton, AB.

Toupin, representing Northern Karate School Aurora, defeated the reigning WKF K1 World Youth Champion Ella Nishida to win the national title on May 17.

The Grade 9 student at Ecole Secondaire Catholique Renaissance reflected on the moment when she defeated Nishida: "Right after I won, I looked out at my parents, coaches, friends, and teammates from the dojo—so many people that have all helped me along the way."

The appreciative 15-year-old discussed the satisfaction of winning gold after years of dedication, sacrifice, and perseverance which included a silver medal at the 2024 Karate Canada Nationals and a bronze medal at the 2025 Karate Canada Nationals.

"I felt proud in that moment—I felt that my hard work had paid off."

The road ahead for Toupin is clear and her plan includes representing Team Canada internationally for the second time at the Junior Pan-American Championships in Costa Rica this summer.

She discussed the impact of winning the Canadian championship as it relates to the upcoming Junior Pan-Ams.

"It's given me confidence after finishing first at the nationals. It's motivated me to work harder—to keep training so I can be more explosive and faster and to take up running so I can build stamina. It's pushing me to medal for the first time at the Pan-Ams."

Competing and travelling around the hemisphere is not new to Toupin as she represented Canada at the 2024 Junior Pan-American Championships in Brazil.

The current Canadian champ described what she learned during her first major international competition: "I lost my first match and I was disappointed, but I realized that I had to learn from each individual performance in order to improve."

In addition to improving as a national championship-calibre athlete, Toupin seeks to better the lives of others less fortunate than her. She actively works within the Philippine Canadian Charitable Foundation (PCCF), promoting youth leadership, cultural pride, volunteerism, and community engagement.

Most recently, Toupin travelled to the Philippines in February for a month-long charitable mission with PCCF.

During the trip, she visited orphanages, women's shelters, and schools for children with special needs and helped to raise awareness about underserved communities.

The Canadian karate champion described the satisfaction that international charity work provides.

"It feels good to help people who are without food and water—to make a difference in their lives."

Toupin's recent trip to the Philippines also had a fun side which included catching up with family and competing in a karate tournament.

"One of the best parts of the trip was going to see my family, especially visiting with my cousins. I also competed in local

tournaments and won four matches.?

When asked how she did overall at the international tourney, the modest first-year high school student nodded and smiled: ?I won gold.?

Toupin is no stranger to the podium in other kinds of competitions as well. In addition to winning the national karate championship last week, Charisma is the reigning Ms. Teen Canada-Philippines.

Her father, Bruce Toupin, who owns Northern Karate School Aurora and served as his daughter's first coach, reflected on Charisma's journey.

?She showed interest in karate when she was four. Along the way, she's learned to be mindful of other people, she's made sacrifices to become a national champion, and during that time, she's learned to be very appreciative and approachable, and she's become so well-liked.?

Charisma's mother, Charity dela Cruz-Toupin, concurred with Coach Toupin's assessment and added that, ?all her competitors are friendly with her.?

She won the Friendship Award at the Miss Teen Canada-Philippines pageant. Charisma is a dedicated student-athlete and continues to inspire young people in Aurora through her hard work, humility, compassion, and commitment both on and off the tatami.?

When asked what advice she would offer younger Aurorans who aspire to be national champions, Charisma Toupin offered wise words that stand the test of time: ?Work hard. Enjoy it. Don't focus on winning all the time. Enjoy your sport and have fun?that's all that matters.?

**By Jim Stewart**