MASTERS ANNUAL REPORT

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MISSION STATEMENT

Martial Arts for Social Transformation, Equity, and Rights (MASTERs) seeks to build community through the growth of martial arts. Our work focuses on training instructors, supporting competitive athletes, and providing community support and mutual aid. MASTERs is working towards a world where the principle of “Jita-Kyoei” or “mutual benefit and well-being” is a common principle. We care about the fundamental worth of all human beings and the importance of community engagement.

Judo and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu have repeatedly demonstrated a remarkable ability to assist people in personal growth. Stories abound about individuals who cite these activities as having changed their lives. That said, these martial arts do not yet hold the same space culturally in the United States to fully realize these gifts.



About Us

MASTERS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to building stronger communities by promoting Judo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) training. We focus on training instructors, supporting athletes, and expanding
access to martial arts for all, especially in underserved areas. Martial arts provide a unique path to personal growth, discipline, and community building. However, Judo and BJJ face challenges in the
U.S. — from limited access to high-level training to socioeconomic barriers. MASTERS addresses these by:

- **Training Skilled Instructors**: Ensuring instructors have comprehensive skills to teach and the resources they need to inspire students of all levels.
- **Supporting Competitive Athletes**: Helping athletes compete on national and international stages while fostering leadership and professional development through mentorship.
- **Increasing Accessibility**: Offering scholarships and free training for low-income families.

TRAINING CAMPS

MASTERs hosted two major training camps:

- **April Training Camp**: Held in collaboration with **Denver Judo** and **El Idrissi Judo Academy**, featuring clinicians **Nefeli Papadakis** (2021 Olympian), **Alaa El Idrissi** (US World Team member), and **Kristin El Idrissi** (accomplished judoka and coach).
- **July Training Camp**: Held in partnership with **Megumi Ishikawa** and the **Global Kids Judo Network**, welcoming participants from **Europe, Canada, and Germany**, in addition to athletes from across the United States.



Clinics

MASTERs brought together world-class athletes and coaches to share their expertise, hosting clinics featuring:

- **Jimmy Pedro**: Two-time Olympic medalist and former head coach of the US Olympic Judo Team will be coming to High Noon Judo in FY25.
- **Dominic Rodriguez**: A US World Team member known for his technical prowess.
- **Shintaro Higashi**: Renowned judoka and martial arts educator known for his innovative teaching style.
- **Megumi Ishikawa**: A representative of **Global Kids Judo Network** focusing on youth development through martial arts.
- **Hannah Martin**: A world-class competitor with multiple international podium finishes.

High Noon Judo's National Championship

In a landmark achievement, **High Noon Judo**, a partner program of MASTERs, became **the first club from Washington, D.C., to win a national championship at the USA Judo Senior National Championships.** This extraordinary accomplishment highlights High Noon's rapid rise to prominence and the effectiveness of its innovative coaching strategies.

One such approach is the **ecological approach** to learning, which focuses on creating environments where athletes learn through real-world scenarios rather than rigid drills. By designing practice sessions that replicate competitive conditions, athletes develop adaptability, creativity, and decision-making skills. This method was instrumental in High Noon Judo's success and reflects MASTERs' commitment to cutting-edge development methodologies.



Athlete Fellows

Shani Glassberg

Nation: United States
Weight Class: 52kgs
Division: U21
Team: High Noon

Shani has been nationally ranked in the top 5 in her category for U21 for the last three years, ranking 3rd for the previous season. When she isn't on the mat she is working on her B.S. in Cellular & Molecular Biology at the George Washington University in D.C., after recently graduating with an A.A.S. in biotechnology.

Ryan Vargas

Nation: United States
Weight Class: 73kgs
Division: Seniors

Ryan made the US Cadet, Junior and Senior World Judo team. He trains and has his eyes set on the 2028 LA Olympics. He took bronze in the 2018 Pan American Championships and earned his spot at the 2019 Pan Am Games. Ryan was the former #1 -66kg for USA and knows what it takes to get to the next level. He holds a double black belt in Judo and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. He gives back to the community by teaching kids/adults Judo and also sharing his love for both sports on his YouTube channel. His passion for Judo has extended beyond reach as he reached Judo in public and private schools, as well as helping young kids and adults start Judo in their local clubs in Florida.

EJ Lynch

Nation: United States
Weight Class: 73kgs
Division: Seniors
Team: USA Stars Foundation/Colton Brown Training Center

EJ is a nationally-ranked judoka who started his international journey in Montreal in 2023. A Nidan in Judo and a blue belt in BJJ, EJ currently attends Colton Brown Training Center in NJ. EJ also had a Judo YouTube channel (Aero EJ) where he reviews and commentates his matches. He is an aspiring athlete to see how far he can make it.

Madeline Solis

Nation: United States
Weight Class: 78kg
Division: Seniors
Team: High Noon/Eastside

Madeline (Maddie) Solis is ranked in the top three in the United States at the 78kg weight class and is a 2x National silver medalist and has medalled at Presidents Cup and US Open. Maddie began her journey in grappling in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu but quickly took to Judo under the guidance of coaches such as Russ Hogan and Lkhamdegd Purevjargal.

Solomon Choran

Nation: Canada
Weight Class: 73kgs
Division: Seniors
Team: High Noon / Action & Reaction MMA

Solomon is a 3x medalist at the Canadian National Championships and in 2023 he took silver at the US Open at 81kgs He also competes in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu where he holds the rank of purple belt. He has worked with several of the best coaches in North America including Josh Hagen, Nick Delpopolo, Jason Morris & Terri Takemori. Solomon has represented Canada at tournaments around the world and is looking forwards to seeing what the next ten years of his career looks like.

Justin Mata

Nation: United States
Weight Class: -60kg
Divisions: Senior & IJF Junior
Team: High Noon

Justin (Shodan) is a 2022 senior national medalist from Charleston, South Carolina. He has been invited to South Korea two years in a row, where he participated in training camps. When Justin is not training Judo, he coaches High school Wrestling and trains multiple youth programs. He is also a BJJ blue belt who is always looking to improve his skills on and off the mat.

Athlete Performance Highlights

Our Athlete Fellowship Program has supported remarkable achievements in 2024, showcasing the success of our athletes on national and international stages. Several fellows will end the year ranked in the top 8 in Olympic categories, underscoring their progress toward representing their countries at the highest levels of competition:

- **Justin Mata**: Achieved silver medals at the US Open in both the IJF Juniors and Seniors categories, establishing himself as one of the favorites for the 2028 Olympic Team at 60kgs.
- **Ryan "Lakea" Vargas**: A former US World Team member (2019) and Pan Am Games medalist, claimed silver at his first international tournament in two years, marking a strong return to international competition.

- **Madeline Solis**: Earned silver at the US Senior Nationals and became the first competitor in four years to score on the US #1 in domestic competition, nearly defeating the top seed in an electrifying final.

- **Solomon Choran**: Competes for Canada and placed 5th at the Continental Open in Montreal and secured a bronze medal at the Canadian Nationals, showcasing his promise toward reaching his goals for 2028.

- **EJ Lynch**: Delivered a commendable performance, placing 5th at the US Open, underscoring his growth and potential in competitive Judo.

- **Rhadi Ferguson Jr.**: Achieved a historic feat by winning four different divisions at the US Senior Nationals, including the IJF Junior category. She will be eligible to begin competing at the senior level next year, positioning her as a rising star in American Judo.

Our Athlete Fellows benefit from world-class coaching and mentorship under the guidance of:

- **Dr. Christopher Round** (Executive Director): A renowned Judo instructor and community leader who led High Noon Judo to its historic national championship.
- **Dr. Rhadi Ferguson** (High Performance Advisor): A four-time national Judo champion and 2004 Olympian who brings unparalleled experience in high-performance coaching.
- **Lauren Meece** (2000 Olympian): A seasoned coach and Olympian who provides invaluable insights into competitive preparation and athlete development.

MASTERs works with athletes representing both partner programs, such as **High Noon Judo** and **Tampa Florida Judo,** as well as athletes training with other programs. For athletes in other programs, we prioritize **collaboration with their coaches**, ensuring a unified approach to their development. This philosophy reflects our commitment to the **success of the athlete above all else.**

Financials

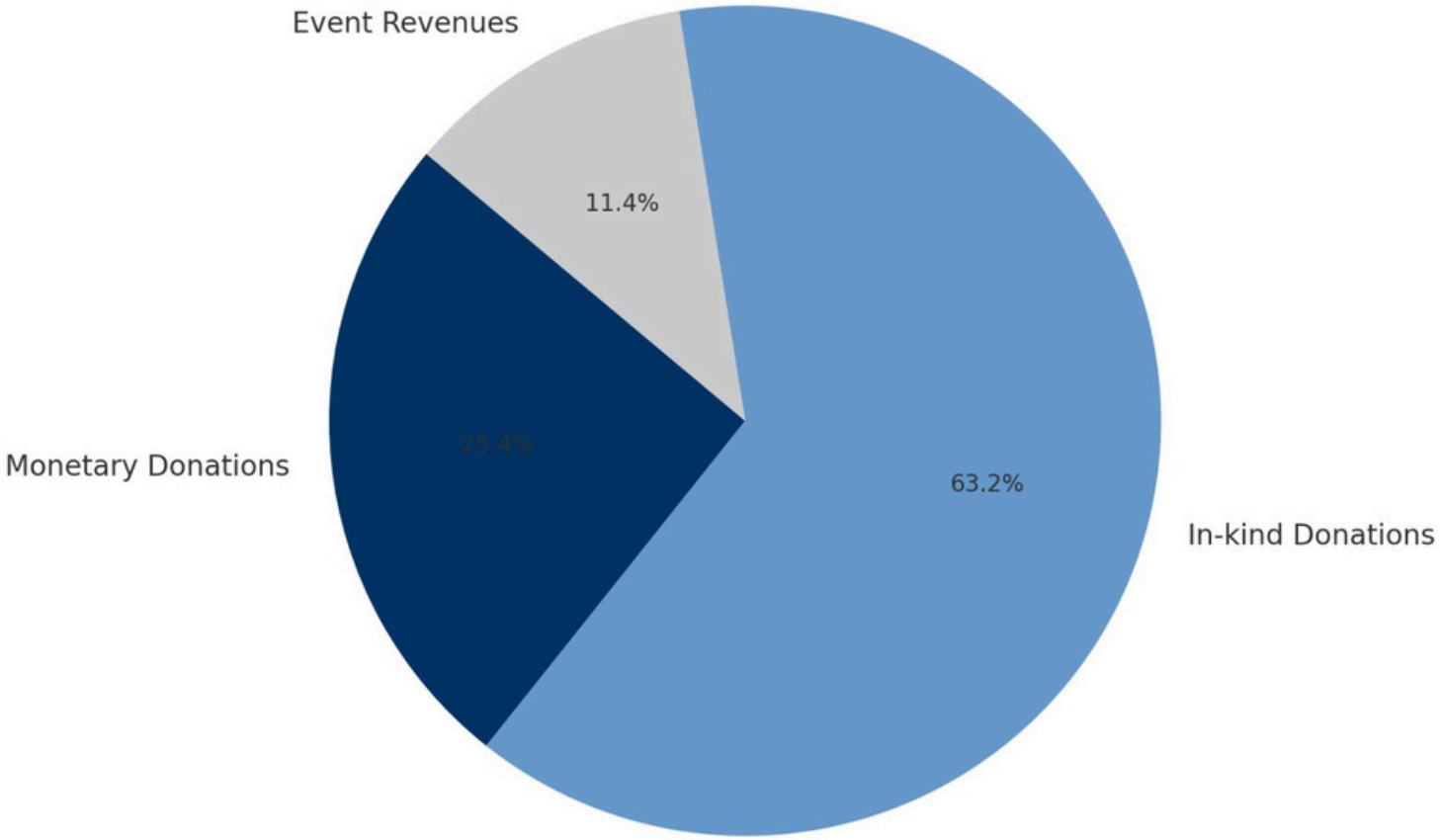
MASTERS is a 501c(3) organization that raises funds through donations, seminars, and events. Our transparent financial practices ensure accountability, with expenses tracked and accessible to board members at any time.

Income:

During the fiscal year (August 15th 2023 - August 15, 2024), MASTERs received a total of $67,729.37 in donations and in-kind contributions. This includes:

- Monetary Donations: $17,218.43
- In-kind Donations: $42,822.56 (including memberships, equipment, and support)
- Event Revenues: $7,688.10

Income breakdown



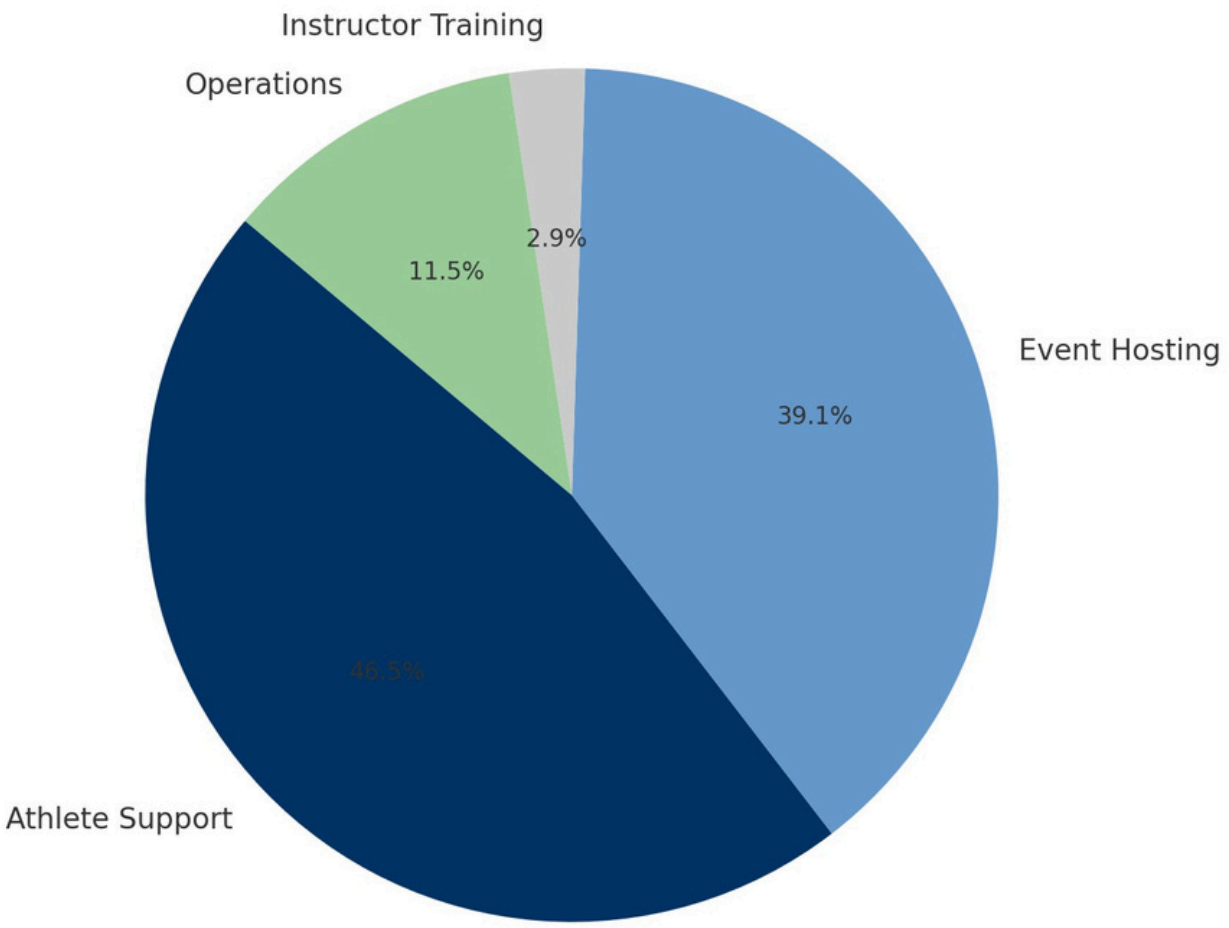
Expenditures:

Expenditures for the year totaled $31,436.25, allocated as follows:

- Athlete Support: $14,631.32
- Event Hosting at High Noon Judo: $12,282.10
- Instructor Training: $900.00
- Operations: $3,622.83

These investments have been pivotal in advancing our mission and supporting our community initiatives.

Expenditure breakdown



Looking Ahead

As we reflect on a year of significant achievements, MASTERs remains steadfast in its mission to use martial arts as a force for social transformation, equity, and rights. We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors, partners, and community for their support. Together, we continue to build a community where mutual benefit and well-being are at the forefront.

For more information about our programs and how to get involved, visit www.martialartsforsocialgood.org.

Prepared by: Dr. Christopher Round, Executive Director