

# Petro-Canada grant helps Melissa Bratic in pursuit of Olympics

Peel Brief.

BRATIC, Melissa

## Mississauga karate athlete given \$10,000 to excel

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**M**elissa Bratic was given \$10,000 on her 18th birthday, but make no mistake, she had to earn it.

Through all of her hard work and success in karate, the Mississauga native was awarded a Petro-Canada \$10,000 Fuelling Athletes and Coaching Excellence (FACE) Program grant.

"It was a good birthday," said Bratic, ranked first in Canada in the under-18 female 59-plus kilogram division.

"It did kind of catch me by surprise because the sport I do isn't too well-known in North America. Now that we're in the Olympics, people are recognizing it and they're helping our karate athletes go far, which I really appreciate."

The grant was given out to 55 promising young athletes. Past recipients include renowned Canadian Olympians such as Hayley Wickenheiser, Patrick Chan and Rosie MacLennan.

Karate will be included in the Olympic program beginning in 2020 and Bratic feels the grant will go a long way in helping her achieve her dream of going to the Olympics.

"It helps out tremendously by letting me compete internationally," she said.

"I just became a senior athlete, so those international competitions do mean a lot. As of 2018, our points count toward the Olympics,



**Melissa Bratic has received a \$10,000 grant as part of Petro-Canada's Fuelling Athletes and Coaching Excellence (FACE) Program.**

Canadian Olympic Committee photo

so it's helping out on my journey 2020 and hopefully qualifying."

Bratic is coming off a gold medal win at the 2017 Cadet and Junior Pan American Championships in Buenos Aires, Argentina, this past August.

She's the third child in a family of four girls who are, or have been among Canada's elite when it comes to karate.

Her father, Hasan, founded GoalMax Karate in Cooksville and her older sisters, Nadja and Ada, won silver and bronze, respectively, at the World Junior and Cadet Karate Championships

in 2007.

While her older sisters accumulated a lot of success through karate, it did take a financial toll on them and they eventually had to move on from the sport.

That's why Bratic feels it's up to her and younger sister Tina to "continue their path."

"They had some minor sponsorships and stuff like that, but when you're not funded by your governing body, it's difficult," Bratic said. "You still get some money, but it's not enough to pay for plane tickets, competition fees,



hotels, stuff like that. It gets pretty pricey."

While she has received some funding from the Ontario Quest for Gold Athlete Assistance Program in the past, Bratic hopes to become a carded athlete and earn more funding now that she's a senior competitor.

Now in her first year at York University studying kinesiology, she said even before karate was included in the 2020 Olympics, the Olympics have been a dream of hers ever since she watched the opening ceremonies of the 2008

Games in Beijing.

Along with the grant she received from Petro-Canada, Bratic was able to join the other recipients at an annual summit in Toronto, where she learned the hard work it takes to become an Olympian.

The recipients also received advice on topics such as media training, public speaking and personal-brand development.

"Just (the Olympians') overall drive was nice to see," Bratic said. "It fuelled everybody's dreams to compete in the Olympics."