

# Smile Project Paralympic Games Supporting School Wheelchair Fencing



Nerima City  
Kaishin Dai-yon  
Junior High School



Japan Wheelchair Fencing  
Association (JWFA)

## Nerima City Kaishin Dai-yon Junior High School < Comments from the School >

- We organized a lecture by the Japan Wheelchair Fencing Association (JWFA), continuing the project off of last year. We received positive comments from our students such as "Wheelchair fencing has become a familiar sport to us" and "I gained a better understanding for disabled sports through the event." The event awakened the students' interest in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.
- After the second lecture, students wrote messages to thank and support the athletes who paid a visit to our school. The athletes and the President of JWFA replied back, and we had greater interaction with JWFA compared to last year. Not only did they help us learn about wheelchair fencing, but they also gave us advice as athletes and individuals. Through the lecture, students comprehended the importance of doing their best on tasks at hand.
- Students reflected on themselves through the lectures. Some lessons they learned were "the importance of making effort everyday," "Appreciate the people around you," "There is no one who has a heart that never breaks," "Learn by challenging the unknown," and "Set small goals and learn from failure."

## Program Overview

### 【Lecture by the Japan Wheelchair Fencing Association (JWFA)】

On September 27, 2017, we organized a lecture for all the students, school staff, parents and locals by Mr. Koichi Ushigome, the executive director of the Japan Wheelchair Fencing Association (JWFA) and the coach of Japan's national team. Mr. Ushigome gave a speech about "viewing disability as uniqueness" and "the importance of moving on." Students listened to his speech very carefully, often taking notes of what he said in their Olympic and Paralympic Education Programme notebooks published by the Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education.

(Students' Comments)

- **I will be careful not to use the words "disabled/handicapped persons" easily and start thinking of disability as uniqueness from now on.**
- **I learned the importance and hard work of staff like trainers who support athletes.**

### 【Lecture and Session by the Japan Wheelchair Fencing Association (JWFA)】

On December 20, 2017, we conducted a lecture and wheelchair fencing session with three guests from JWFA: Mr. Shintaro Kano (national team member); Mr. Akira Tsunoda (candidate member of the national team); and Mr. Koichi Ushigome (executive director and national team coach). The athletes Mr. Kano and Mr. Tsunoda shared messages to students about **"the importance of believing in your potential and following your dreams even if you have a disability,"** and **"setting goals to strive for everyday."** After the lecture, one student and one teacher from each grade tried out wheelchair fencing. Both students and teachers struggled to touch valid target areas of the opponent, but everyone, whether they tried out wheelchair fencing or just watched the session, had a very exciting time. During Q&A time, students asked questions about how the athletes prepare their mind before the game. Mr. Kano stated at the end of event "We only have a year until the Paralympics' qualifying trials. I will keep making efforts everyday to prepare myself."

(Comment from a Student Who Tried Wheelchair Fencing)

- **When I faced the athlete in the game, I felt tense and nervous like I have never experienced before. I was surprised by how quickly the athlete moved.**

## 【Sending Messages of Appreciation and Support to the Athletes】

On December 21, 2017, **all the students wrote messages of appreciation and support to the wheelchair fencing athletes.**

(Student's comment)

- I felt that I need to stop viewing people with impairments as "disabled persons" and start treating them as individuals.

