

Brooklyn Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Hits the Waves With Life Rolls On, Empowering Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Surfers

The Brooklyn martial arts network headed to Far Rockaway to help shift negative stereotypes of the paralysis community.

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Maintaining a decade-long focus on local charity support, [Brooklyn Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu](#), Brooklyn's premier network of cooperative martial arts schools, took to the ocean on Saturday as a volunteer group for Life Rolls On, a unique organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for young people affected by spinal cord injury.

Life Rolls On travels the world empowering paraplegics and quadriplegics to experience the freedom of mobility by riding a wave with the assistance of adaptive equipment and the support of hard working volunteers. Over the last two years, BBJJ has marshaled its forces and brought teams



Brooklyn Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu hits the beach in Far Rockaway with Life Rolls On

to support these amazing surfers in Rockaway Beach.

“Life Rolls On has been a critical event for our schools over the last two years,” says martial arts instructor Josh Skyer. “It’s there in our mission statement - compassion, generosity, perseverance, and involvement form the core of our work, and both our staff and students strive to truly live them, every day of the year.”

Brooklyn Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu holds a unique position in the martial arts world: a community built not on traditional competitions or tournaments, but on cooperation and collaboration as a vehicle for personal growth. Martial arts, say the BBJJ instructors, asks for inclusion rather than exclusion.

“When we start to develop an elitist mindset, we do more harm than good in the world,” says [Brooklyn BJJ founder Gene Dunn](#). “Life Rolls On represents the opposite pole. They push the boundaries so that people who’ve felt for a long time like they’re on the outside can participate in this activity once again.”

Life Rolls On “shifts negative stereotypes of the paralysis community, as the public is able to learn, through watching or by participating in this program, what is truly possible beyond paralysis.”

The Brooklyn martial arts organization chooses a different charity partner each month, and says that the LRO event is their most popular collaboration.

Skyer continues. “Our work is about teaching people to live healthier lives, and LRO is fulfilling a likeminded goal. They’re showing people - participants and observers alike - not to accept artificial limits.”

It’s a natural fit because empowerment, whether through self-defense or self-confidence, is at the forefront of BJJ’s mission. The Brooklyn martial arts schools focus on the health and well-being of adults and children in five neighborhoods - Bensonhurst, Cobble Hill, Clinton Hill, Dyker Heights and Gravesend. But its charity work extends beyond those neighborhoods.

“We believe in serving our communities by changing the perception of what’s possible for our students, and then encouraging them to share that with the world at large,” says Gene Dunn. “Life Rolls On is inspiring in this way. We’re watching the immediate impact of cooperation, inclusion and respect - the deepest principles of the martial arts.”

To learn more about the collaborative martial arts methods of Brooklyn Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, visit www.brooklynbjj.com

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