PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Olympic bronze medalist Clarissa Chun took on all comers at Bancroft Middle School last week and gave a lift to the students who came to see her.

By Jim Knowles

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The students at Bancroft Middle School got a chance to take on an Olympic Bronze medalist last week.

One by one, the middle schoolers tried but nobody had a chance, even if they were bigger than the 105-pound Clarissa Chun who won the Bronze medal in the 2012 Olympics in London.

Chun let them all down easily, smiling the whole time and making a game of it. Chun is such an adept wrestler, she can roll an opponent over her shoulder and lay them out on the mat as gently tucking a baby into a crib.

Bancroft teacher and wrestling coach Dave D'Antonio introduced Chun to the students last Thursday morning in the gym. The 4-foot-11 Olympian held the students attention as she told

them about how she reached the olympics, and at the end, brought out her bronze medal and carried it around the room for all the students to see.

Standing up on the podium in London with her medal and seeing the American flag being raised was awesome, Chun told the kids.

“I got to meet some amazing people,” Chun said. “I couldn’t believe I was standing right next to Koby Bryant, LaBron James, Serena Williams and Michael Phelps.”

The kids were pretty much hanging on her every word.

Then she told them about being with the American athletes who were invited to the White House and how how they met President Obama.

“He was so kind and he shook hands with every one of us,” she said.

Chun was born and raised in Honolulu. She won the state wrestling title while attending Roosevelt High in Honolulu, the first year girls' wrestling was a sanctioned sport.

She later went to Missouri Valley College, and the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Chun lost in the 2008 Olympic bronze medal match, but made her mark by finishing fifth. A few months later she won the 2008 World Championships in Tokyo. And in 2012 she made the U.S. Olympic team again and captured the bronze medal in women's freestyle wrestling.

Chun told the Bancroft students that amazing things can happen to you if you just keep growing and learning in school and strive to be the best you can be.

"Whatever you pursue, strive for the top," Chun said.