

Junior Master Dan Morton lauds healthful benefits of Tae Kwon Do training

During heavy allergy season in November 2002, San Antonio, Texas-based instructor Junior Master Dan Morton, 4th Dan Black Belt, was gearing up to prepare for his 5th Dan Black Belt testing when he learned that his chronic scratchy throat was not a result of the heavy mountain cedar that wreaks havoc on allergy sufferers in the Southwest Texas area. Instead, it was one of the first signs of a life-threatening disease: throat cancer.

The physical, spiritual and mental-discipline he learned through years of Tae Kwon Do training at Kim's Academy under the tutelage of Grandmaster In Mook Kim and Master Ki Wook Kim, helped him to face this challenge head on and overcome it.

"I had a scratchy throat, and it was getting harder and harder for me to swallow," recalls Morton. "At first, I just thought it was the mountain cedar, which is so prevalent in San Antonio at that time of year. And, I wouldn't have gone to the doctor, but my son had been sick, and we'd made him a doctor's appointment. He couldn't make the scheduled appointment so I went to the appointment instead, and had our family doctor look at my throat. After a brief exam, the doctor referred me to an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist," he says.

After the initial exam, the ENT had Morton undergo a CAT scan – immediately. The growth revealed during the CAT scan alarmed the ENT, who quickly scheduled and performed a biopsy.

"When the doctor told me that the result of the biopsy was a malignant (cancerous) growth, and it had progressed farther along than he would have liked to see, I just thought, 'Well that's the way it is. What do we do next?'"

A student of Kim's Tae Kwon Do Academy since 1992, Morton viewed his diagnosis just as school founder and leader Grandmaster Kim treats any challenge in class: "You have to believe you can do it and get through it."

"With TKD, it's never a matter of quitting," says Morton. "It's always just the next challenge that you are faced with that you hurdle over – a stepping stone to your next success, but never a roadblock," he said.

That's the positive mental attitude that provided Morton with the mental strength to overcome the cancer.

After visiting specialists, Morton learned that because of his good physical condition, he was eligible for an experimental treatment that combined high doses of chemotherapy with radiation treatments.

"If it weren't for the years of Tae Kwon Do training, I couldn't have endured the treatments – physically or mentally," says Morton.

Once the treatments began, Morton didn't have the physical strength to attend Kim's Academy to work-out, but he found ways to visit the Academy and practice his daily forms and exercises through the power of his mind.

In his mind, Morton would visualize as he performed the series of Tae Kwon Do Hyungs (Forms); Ilbo Daeryon (one-step sparring); Sambo Daeryon (three-step sparring); and Jayoo Daeryon (free sparring) techniques that we practice in our classes at Kim's Academy.

"I wouldn't have made it through the CAT scans without my Tae Kwon Do training," says Morton.

A CAT scan is a procedure in which a patient lies still [\(continued on next page\)](#)

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for 30 minutes on his back in a snug, body-sized circular tube, with only inches between his body and the cold, metal tubing.

"I would lie there and visualize going over my forms repeatedly. That made the time pass, and allowed me to concentrate on something other than the darkness surrounding me," he recalls.

That mental visualization also proved beneficial during his nearly three-hour chemotherapy treatments.

"During chemotherapy treatments, I would go through our class exercises. I'd do all of the basics and then the forms and afterwards even visualize myself stretching, and doing strengthening exercises," he says.

In addition, Morton would engage in what many believe is a proven beneficial treatment for those suffering life-threatening diseases: positive self-talk.

"Grandmaster Kim and Master Kim always stress the importance of a positive mental attitude," says Morton. "I believe as they do that a positive mental attitude influences our mind, and affects our bodies in a positive way," he says.

Grandmaster Kim has introduced many innovative elements to Tae Kwon Do's mental, physical and spiritual teaching methodologies. This explains why he is often referred to as the "Father of Modern Tae Kwon Do."

"When students join Kim's Academy of Tae Kwon Do, they think it's a sport," shares Grand Master Kim. "But Tae Kwon Do is a way of life. It makes people the best they can be makes them live to their fullest potential."

Dan Morton, who continues as an instructor at Kim's Academy, as well as training for his 5th Dan Black Belt, understands the importance of that philosophy and attitude.

"I've always believed that anything worth doing is worth overdoing," he smiles.

By October 2004, Morton underwent nearly seven months of treatment, lost 30 lbs, his hair, and most of his strength. But today, Spring of 2006, Morton is back in step with his Tae Kwon Do training. Morton works out and participates in class activities at least four times per week, and is part of the San Antonio-based school's demonstration team.

"I don't feel like I'm back at full strength yet, and I get frustrated because I'm not there yet, but I get stronger ever day, and I'll be ready to test for my 5th Dan," he says, reflecting that positive mental attitude he's developed through his year's of training at Kim's Tae Kwon Do Academy.

"I have always respected Grandmaster Kim and Master Kim because of their positive philosophies and attitude. They're positive people, and we tend to stay

with people of like philosophy. And, I am glad I have because, after all, my life depended on it."

"Watch for a similar feature on Grandmaster Kim and Junior Master Morton in the May 2006 issue of *Tae Kwon Do Times*."

--by Diane M., 2R Black Belt with Kim's Academy of San Antonio, Texas.

Reflections of a Master

Why Do I Teach?



Master James Perron,
6th Dan

New martial arts schools open on a daily basis, with windows full of trophies, offers of free lessons, uniforms, mastery of more than one martial system, and other incentives to join. Some of these schools are legitimate satellites of established organizations. Unfortunately many are not. The "master" of the school has taken it upon himself/herself to "develop his/her own style" after achieving a 1st or 2nd degree black belt, and elevating himself/herself to the rank of "master" instructor. With their vast knowledge, they no longer need any outside instruction, nor feel the need for loyalty to the organization and Grandmaster with 40-50 years of experience, who taught them all he/she knows. These are the people who feel that the organization and instructors who taught them are stifling their efforts to advance in the martial arts and reach their full potential.

These "master" instructors dazzle the parents of child enrollees with his/her enthusiasm and interest in their children and stories of tournaments won and fights survived by using their fighting skills. As novices in the martial arts, these students and/or their parents see only the black belt, assuming this to be indicative of the "master's" knowledge, honor and integrity. What people joining these schools fail to do is ask to see proof of rank and certification, and information about the institution sanctioning the school and their belt ranks, if not openly displayed. Over time, these [\(continued on next page\)](#)

(Reflections, continued)

students will realize they have been duped into paying for instruction in poor technique, limited, if any, philosophical instruction, and values that afford limited personal development. These schools soon close, the "master" leaving town to start over anonymously at another location. Unfortunately, this practice disheartens potential students from looking into legitimate instruction from an established martial arts school.

As an ACTA instructor, my thoughts regarding teaching always return to the well being of the student. As an instructor, it is my responsibility as I advance in rank to learn more and to pass these teachings on to my students. As instructors, we teach by exemplifying the tenets of courtesy, integrity, self control, perseverance and indomitable spirit. Why? I feel I speak for all ACTA instructors when I make this statement. "Our goal is not to teach people to become fighters, but to help them become better people." We do this by stressing not only the physical, but also the spiritual and mental aspects of Tae Kwon Do. The five tenets are the foundation of the teachings passed on to us by Grandmaster Kim. If we are remiss in teaching, defining, and demonstrating the tenets to our students, they fail to become whole Tae Kwon Do practitioners. I have had the opportunity to converse with non-ACTA students about their school's philosophy instruction. When I ask about their thoughts regarding the tenets, I am answered with an inquisitive stare followed by the question, "what are those?" I had to wonder what else their instructor was not teaching.

I have personally told all my students that regardless of how skillful they are as technicians, tournament sparrers, form practitioners or how well they can teach, without the tenets, we as martial artists are nothing. We have not achieved harmony with ourselves, humility in the eyes of our peers, students and superiors, or realized our inner potential.

The ACTA under Grandmaster Kim has *always* fostered the highest quality instruction, instructor training, philosophical development and practice of values that are paramount to daily living. This commitment to excellence and his unswerving dedication to his students, the development of Kim Ra Do, and continuous research of Tae Kwon Do history and technique have resulted in one of the finest Tae Kwon Do academies and instructor teams in the United States.

So, why do I teach? I am looking to better myself by helping others better themselves. I feel that if I can make a difference in the life of a child, or help some-

one change direction of life for the better, and then I have accomplished something worthwhile. There are too many children, teens and adults with no direction in life who could be enlightened by participating in Tae Kwon Do classes. We see teens in trouble, children abused and bullied, and adults sinking into anger and frustration on a daily basis. By helping them regain their self-respect, develop their self-confidence, learn the tenets, practice the tenets, and to realize their own potential, I can give back some of what I have been taught. Hopefully this will lead to becoming better human beings physically, mentally and spiritually in all aspects of life. The flaw in this philosophy is that individuals must realize they are missing something and want that thing in their life before they will search for whatever that something may be. I realize that Tae Kwon Do is not the answer for everyone, but I sincerely hope that it will be included in his or her search.

(Self-defense tip for the day: If ever cornered at the circus by a group of malevolent clowns, always go for the juggler first!)

Kickin' Around

by Diane Mitchell

Mental, physical and spiritual aspects of Tae Kwon Do transcend centuries, cultures

While some executives may "kick back" at the end of a stressful day with a meal or glass of wine and soft music, others end their days kicking around – literally.

Six days a week, during lunch hours and after-hours, one can find businessmen and women from a variety of industries practicing an ancient form of Oriental art, *Tae Kwon Do*, which means "kick, punch and the way," under the direction of 9th Degree Black Belt Grand Master In Mook Kim, leader of Kim's Academies throughout the nation.

"The choice to kick back after the work day presents itself all too often," says 2nd Dan Black Belt Scott Brueckner. But that's where the Tae Kwon Do tenets of "indomitable spirit" and "perseverance" kick in, he says.

"We always have the choice to stop trying," says Brueckner who has been a student of Tae Kwon Do for 25 years and has served as an assistant instructor at Kim's Academy of Tae Kwon Do in Germany. **(continued on next page)**

(Kickin', continued)

"And there are many men my age, 43, who make the choice to stop trying to maintain their physical agility or are physically unable to train at a high level of physical stress. But, I find that the training provided through Tae Kwon Do – if you endure for the long term – makes giving up a much harder decision."

Plus, Brueckner says, the "post-workout adrenaline from a Tae Kwon Do workout is hard to beat. And, the comprehensive before workout stretching increases flexibility and reduces risk of serious injury."

But there's more than just the physical-health benefits that make Tae Kwon Do a regular routine for these professionals. Other positive aspects of the centuries-old martial art that they attest to range from stress relief, continuous self-development, learning about the Korean culture, and the camaraderie with fellow students and instructors.

"It's a good release and escape from the workday routine and it's a way to vent my frustration from the workday," said Richard Bautista, electrical technician, and 1st Dan Black Belt, who began his Tae Kwon Do practice in October 2003.

Rosalie Molina, 2nd Dan Black Belt, points out other positive aspects. "I started Tae Kwon Do late in life, when I was 49, but have stuck with it not only because of the positive physical aspects, but also because of the constant challenge to do better. There's always a step ahead that we can set our sights towards to challenge ourselves as individuals. And, the frequent testing provides mini-goals and accomplishments," she says.

Those goals also build self-confidence, attests Keith Gutschke, who attributes his Tae Kwon Do training with providing him the confidence, self-discipline and perseverance needed to launch his own financial planning and stock brokerage business.

"We know and are expected to live the tenets of Tae Kwon Do – courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self control and indomitable spirit," says Gutschke, a 3rd Dan Black Belt who has studied at Kim's Academy for nearly nine years. "We get a deep sense of tradition as we learn parts of the Korean language, history of Korea through names of forms (series of movements) and history behind those names."

Learning traditional Tae Kwon Do from Grand Master In Mook Kim, who is linked to Korean royal heritage, also has its benefits.

"Grandmaster Kim gives you bits and pieces of his days in Korea, what it was like working out there," said 5th Dan Black Belt Junior Master Bill Moyer, who is an instructor at Kim's Academy of Tae Kwon Do in San Antonio and member of the demonstration team. "Not only is Grandmaster Kim of noble Korean ancestry, but he shares his experiences of living and training in Korea. Tae Kwon Do to him seems more like a part of life rather than a uniform that you put on while you're working out," said Moyer, president of WDM and Associates, whose company teaches health and wellness courses, such as CPR and First Aid.

"While training under Grand Master Kim, you truly begin to understand integrity," Moyer continues. "It's easy when we bow to the flags when everyone is in the room, but when you bow to the flags whether someone else is in the room or not – that's when you're getting it," said Moyer.

Kim keeps the Korean tradition alive during lunch-hour, evening and weekend classes at his academies.

The health factor

Gutschke and several of the other instructors and adult students who study at Kim's have been athletically active most of their lives.

Gutschke, who played college football and was the back-up kicker behind Jeff Ward at the University of Texas-Austin, said he is more in shape now than he was during his college days.

"I wish I did this when I was kicking because I'm much more flexible now," Gutschke said.

2nd Recommended Black Belt Darryl Flowers agrees with Gutschke. "Tae Kwon Do has increased my flexibility, and it has also improved my strength and overall physical condition. Plus, injuries that I sustained in both school and recreational football – that I thought were permanent – are no longer there."

Not only does the workout prove beneficial physically, but there's an important aspect that also appears to be widely popular among this group of martial artists.

"I don't do sick days," said 5th Dan Black Belt John Simmons.

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(Kickin', continued)

And that's no small feat for Junior Master Simmons. His typical 18-to-24 hour workday consists of a 2 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. shift transporting essential dairy products throughout South Texas, then on to serving as instructor at Kim's Academy of Tae Kwon Do from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., and then jumping on stage where he performs as a singer and bassist for a rock 'n' roll band from 9:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.

"I've always been active in sports. And Tae Kwon Do has helped me maintain my high energy level and boost my endurance factor. That's important to me not just for work, but also for my family," added Simmons, who played college football, and during high school was named All-District and All-City Most Valuable Defensive Player among high schools in San Antonio and surrounding areas.

"I don't even use sick days and it's absolutely because of Tae Kwon Do that I stay so healthy," added Gutschke, who earned an award from his previous employer for working five years with no sick days.

Sidebar

Instructors and students at Kim's Academy value the rich aspects of Korean culture and history that Grand Master In Mook Kim and his sons Ki Wook and Howard Kim share with their students. Grandmaster Kim's family lineage can be traced back to the Shilla Dynasty (57 B.C. to 935 A.D.), which precedes the development of the famous aristocratic youth group -- *Hwa-Rang Do* (7th century A.D.). The Hwa-Rang Do is credited with developing the martial arts in Korea during the Shilla Dynasty and its members are well known as the knights and warriors of the Shilla Dynasty. Members of this brave youth group were able to defend Korea successfully for three centuries against foreign invaders.

About Grandmaster In Mook Kim:

Born and raised in South Korea, San Antonio, Tx,-based Grandmaster Kim's family lineage can be traced to the Shilla Dynasty (57 B.C. - 935 A.D.), where his first ancestor Al Jie was adopted by the royal family and served in several important positions for the Shilla Kingdom. Grandmaster Kim is also a descendant of Mi-Jhu, who served as king of the Shilla Dynasty from 262 A.D through 284 A.D.

Grandmaster Kim was one of the first Tae Kwon Do instructors for the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army, whose soldiers are revered internationally for their bravery and hand-to-hand combat skills used during the Korean Conflict and Vietnam War.

Grand Master Kim, who moved to the United States in 1968, has developed a network of academies throughout the Midwest and southern regions of the United States. Since 1970, Grandmaster Kim has established Tae Kwon Do training programs under the auspices of Kim's Academy and the ACTA in 12 states.

To date, he has actively taught more than 10,000 students annually the mental, physical and spiritual aspects of Tae Kwon Do.

The technical skills of Kim's Academy students are regularly evaluated during the ACTA's 20 annual national and regional promotional testings conducted throughout the United States

Grandmaster Kim has distinguished himself as a champion and outstanding international competitor. Recognized internationally as one of the world leaders of the discipline, he has traveled around the world promoting the art of Tae Kwon Do, has been honored with numerous international and national accolades for his contributions to Tae Kwon Do, earning him the nickname of the "Father of Modern Tae Kwon Do." Kim's academies celebrated their 35-year anniversary in 2005.

Diane Mitchell, is a 2R Black Belt with Kim's Academy of San Antonio, TX.

♦ ACTA Holds Regional Testings and Seminars

KENTUCKY SPRING TESTING AND INSTRUCTOR CLINIC



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(Kentucky Regional Testing, continued)

Students from the Kentucky clubs gathered at the University of Louisville Crawford Gym on April 21 and 22nd for the spring promotional testing and clinic. This testing featured a large group of very young white and yellow belts; these new students did a great job of demonstrating their forms and one-step sparring.

Students from white through 3rd Dan Recommended Black belt completed the testing.

On Saturday morning 20 students returned to Crawford Gym for the instructional clinic. Led by Grand Master Kim, the clinic focused on basic techniques. In the basic form exercise, Grand Master Kim emphasized the use of action/reaction in all techniques. He suggested counting "one-two" on performance of the technique to give equal time for the technique and the recoil. Blocks should be done with a purpose, not just a rote motion. Students should choose their target carefully and purposefully.

Students then practiced various techniques using the air-shield pads. Emphasis was on quick penetration of the pad and then recoil, not on knocking the pad holder back. Again, the emphasis was on action/reaction with each technique. Students practiced quick round kicks, with an attempt to achieve just the thickness of a sheet of paper between their foot and the pad.

Grand Master Kim then led the group in a review of basic grab and release techniques. He ended the clinic with some new partner stretching exercises; an emphasis was placed on the importance of stretching for all ages. Grand Master Kim noted that a student is never too old to stretch, and that as we get older, it is not so important that we can kick high, but that our kicks are strong. He noted that there are still good targets that do not involve a high kick.

Once again, the students from the University of Louisville, Northeast, Southwest, and Double Dragon Tae Kwon Do clubs would like to thank Grand Master Kim for a very successful and informative testing and clinic.

CLINTON HOSTS 8TH BLACK BELT EVENT

Submitted by Master James L. Perron, 6th Dan, Master Instructor, Clinton YWCA TaeKwonDo Club

The Clinton, IA ACTA hosted its 8th Annual ACTA Black Belt Event on February 18, 2006 at the Camanche, IA High School gymnasium. The day was a

flurry of activity with Grandmaster Kim conducting the Instructor's clinic from 9:00 until 10:30 A.M. The clinic was geared to Q&A on Chon-Ji to Won Hyo hyungs.

The Black, Brown and Red belt clinic from 10:45 to 12:15 P.M. was focused on breakaway self-defense. Grandmaster Kim explained and had each technique demonstrated by senior instructors, then practiced by the class, with critiques by the senior instructors. During the clinic, Grandmaster Kim stressed the importance of focusing our kicks and hand techniques. Jr. Master Griffin of the Marion, IA YMCA TKD program helped demonstrate the difference between focusing a kick on the target and kicking through the target. Students were then given the opportunity to practice this concept with target pads.

The testing commenced with the annual presentation of the Kent D. Mortensen Memorial award. Jr. Master Mortensen was the founder of the Clinton TaeKwonDo Club and died of cancer in 1997. To keep his memory alive, the Clinton YWCA TaeKwonDo Club presents an award based on nominations by the student body for the student who most exemplifies the tenets of Tae Kwon Do in class and in their everyday life. This year's award was presented to Darrell Snobl, 4D Blue Belt. Student of the Year awards were presented to Ms. Roane Hand, 7D Orange belt and Ms. Katie Schimerowski, 1R Brown belt. These students were chosen based on improvement in performance, attitude and consistency of attendance. Jr. Master Griffin presented Student of the Year awards to Marion, Iowa students Gage Bauserman 1D, Black, Louise Hanson, 1D, Black, and Danielle Toy 1R Brown Belt.

Grandmaster Kim and Jr. Masters from Clinton and Marion, Iowa and Minneapolis, MN conducted testing proceedings for 15 Black Belts from 1st Recommended to 2nd Recommended from Iowa and Minnesota, as well as 14 Brown and Red belts from Clinton, Marion, and Epworth, Iowa.

A Dutch treat dinner at one of the local Chinese restaurants capped the day.



Minnesota ACTA Conducts Interclub Tournament

On February 25th, 2006 students from the four clubs that make up ACTA Minnesota met at the Chanhasen Recreation Center to compete in an interclub tournament. Over 50 students competed in form and sparring.

The tournament participants made the judge's job of selecting the winners difficult. The students who participated in form all brought their "A" game. In many cases, just a ½ point separated the Gold, Silver and Bronze winners. The sparring events were exciting with many well-matched competitors going down to the wire. Several matches went to sudden death before declaring a winner.

Here are the gold medal winners in form and sparring

FORM

Fasal Janetkhan
Jake Ward
Carter James
Keetan Rutledge
Jake Engel
Nicolas Pouliquen
Naime Phitakpongsutee
Alden Chung
Jessica Chung
Noah Anderson

SPARRING

Allison Davis
Julia Huber
Annie Stringini
Samantha Gleason
Pehdrum Kohsravi
Jake Ward
Adam Abrams
Nicolas Pouliquen
Joe Dirkswager
Tony Dolski
Graham Kist



The Benefits of a Family Oriented Organization

Reported by Junior Master Steven Griffin (5th Dan)

For the last 30 years, Grandmaster Kim has worked diligently to build the ACTA into an organization built around dedication to achieving excellence in Chung Do Kwan Tae Kwon Do and, more recently, Kim Ra Do. In addition to producing martial artists that excel in the physical aspects of Tae Kwon Do, the ACTA is a very close knit, family oriented organization. A large percentage of ACTA students take class along side their spouses, children, parents or siblings. Over time, the benefits of learning the tenets of Tae Kwon Do and sharing life as an ACTA student with a family member can be a life changing experience.

My Tae Kwon Do career started in the fall of 1986. Shortly thereafter, my older sister, Laurel, also joined class, and was eventually followed by my mother, in 1993. While my sister's calling was as a competitive gymnast, she still earned a 2nd Degree Black belt over the years. In June 2005, my mother became a 4th Dan, Junior Master. Needless to say, after having our family be members of the ACTA for nearly 20 years, our lives have been changed, shaped and improved by Tae Kwon Do. For our family, Tae Kwon Do offered a positive environment for us to bond and share positive experiences, while improving ourselves both mentally and physically. Even my father, who is not an ACTA student, has been able to share our experiences through our countless trips to testings, camps and clinics. We have been able to teach each other, support each other, and even spar together over the years, but the one thing that our family has always had in common with one another is Tae Kwon Do. Now that Laurel and I are both grown and away from home, many of our family visits are scheduled around Tae Kwon Do events. Through the practice of the tenets of Tae Kwon Do, we share a bond that wouldn't have been available to us without such a strong family activity.

In many ACTA programs, nearly 50% of the total enrollment is made up of families that share Tae Kwon Do together. Whether it's two young siblings taking class together or an entire family of 4, the ACTA has been built around, not just dedicated members, but dedicated families.

The Tenets of Tae Kwon Do – Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self Control and Indomitable Spirit – provide a basis for every student, regardless of age or ability, to improve their lives by practicing Tae Kwon Do. Tae Kwon Do is also unique in that each individual has the opportunity to excel in different areas based on his or her own strengths and weaknesses. ACTA instructors are trained to have high expectations for their students and to have strict rules for their dojangs, but are also taught to be positive at all times while encouraging students to improve. These values create an environment that allows both children and adults to learn self-respect and dedication, while finding something positive to be passionate about.

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(Family continued)

By practicing Tae Kwon Do together, siblings gain a positive bond to one another. Parents have the opportunity to join their children and share life changing experiences with them that include learning to value the importance of hard work, seeing personnel improvement because of that hard work, and the gratification of achieving goals.

Sharing Tae Kwon Do with family members provides a unique opportunity to form a strong bond that reaches across generations and personality types. Every student of the ACTA is treated with the same level of respect and courtesy. Because of this, a mutual respect is developed between family members, fellow students and instructors. ACTA Tae Kwon Do programs provide wonderful environments for families to grow together, stay close with one another, or reconnect with one another.

The Student Perspective

Ms. Annie Stringini – 1st Dan Black Belt



Hi! My name is Annie Stringini. I am 13 years old. I started Tae Kwon Do when I was 8 at the Chanhassen Rec. Center. I have been fortunate to have Jr. Master Jeff Engel, Jr. Master Don Crenshaw and Mr. Terry Dahl as my instructors. I received my 1st Decided Black Belt in February of 2005.

Doing Tae Kwon Do has not always been easy for me. You see, in December of 2003 I was diagnosed with a vision disorder called Stargardt's disease. Stargardt's Disease is a juvenile form of macular degeneration. For those of you who have never heard of Stargardt's, it is an eye condition that occurs in the retina or very back of the eye. The eye's pump that pumps protein does not work quite right and causes the protein to stick to the center back portion of your eye causing me to have a loss of sight in my central vision.



The first time I noticed the effect of my vision condition in Tae Kwon Do was when I was testing for my Brown belt. While I was doing the form portion of my testing, Master Dolski asked me to redo my form. The area where he noticed that I had done something different than was actually taught in the form, when redoing it I made the same deviation in the

same spot. He asked, "Where did you learn that" and I replied "At class at the Chanhassen Rec Center". He must have thought that someone had taught me this deviation in error. My conclusion is that it was my interpretation of what was being taught without clearly seeing what was being demonstrated.

Even though I have this condition, I still get along just like everyone else. I play soccer, basketball, singing, and guitar, in addition to Tae Kwon Do. I have to work a little harder to accomplish these things but I still accomplish them.

A few weeks ago Mr. Engel had a great idea for our new charity project. It was to help the Foundation for Fighting Blindness, which is an organization designed to help not only people with Stargaurts, but people with other genetic eye problems such as [Retinitis Pigmentosa](#), [Usher Syndrome](#), Macular Degeneration and many more. I think it is a great idea. Well I hope my article inspired you to get active towards our cause. You can visit the Foundation Fighting Blindness website at www.fightblindness.org/ffb.

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