

Tae Kwon Do

I became interested in Martial Arts as a boy. I remember taking karate classes at the Police Athletic League. I also remember dressing up as a Ninja on for Halloween. Later, I became interested in other sports such as soccer, football, basketball, and track and did not pursue martial arts until I was an adult (21 years old). It was at that time that I researched the various types of martial arts including Karate, Judo, and Kung Fu. I started reading about Tae Kwon Do and its history. I liked all of the different types of kicks that it offered. I decided to join. I started out at a local Tae Kwon Do studio and soon achieved my yellow belt. Soon after that I heard of world-renowned martial arts grandmaster Hee Il Cho opening up a studio nearby. I decided to observe a class. I was amazed at the level of intensity that was displayed during this, one of his first classes in Albuquerque. All of the students were drenched in sweat and yelling (kiyap) as they moved rapidly up and down the floor. Although I enjoyed going to my other studio, at that moment I knew that I had to join.

I began training with grandmaster Hee Il Cho and quickly saw the benefits of his instruction. Not only did my punches, kicks, blocks, and forms improve, but also my knowledge of Tae Kwon Do, Korea, and Grandmaster Cho. After several years, Grandmaster Cho moved on to teach in Hawaii. I was very sad to see him go. This was the first test of my commitment to this art form. I admit considering quitting after he left because anyone who would teach me after him would not compare. Then I started thinking that if Grandmaster Cho had taught me anything in his years in Albuquerque it was to have perseverance and an indomitable spirit. I am thankful and grateful for learning this as I have enjoyed continuing training and learning from the Farrell's. I am also thankful that the Farrell's took on the responsibility and commitment to continue keeping Cho's Tae Kwon Do New Mexico strong.

At first Tae Kwon Do to me was all about punching and kicking. I now realize that the benefits of this martial art reach much deeper. Since I have trained under Grandmaster Cho and the Farrell's, I have strived to become a better parent, husband, and a good person in general. Tae Kwon Do has helped me to set goals and then work to achieve these goals. I do not know if I could have finished school or raise my family without the discipline and values that Tae Know Do has rooted in its foundations, principles and tenants.

Through Tae Kwon Do I continue improve my self-confidence by competing in tournaments and testing for higher ranks. I have been blessed to meet people from all over the world who share the same passion for Tae Kwon Do as I do. I have been fortunate enough to travel to other states and countries to compete in tournaments. I have met many friends at Tae Kwon Do who I enjoy working out with.

I am grateful for what Tae Kwon Do has done for me. Grandmaster Cho used to say that you cannot build a tall building without a strong foundation. Tae Kwon Do has helped me to build a good foundation for my life. I look forward to many more years of training, learning and improving my martial arts skill as well as the development of my character.

Respectfully Yours,

Felipe Rivera