

Black Belt Essay by Tyler Adler

Hi most of you already know me but for those who don't my name is Tyler Adler. I am 15 years old and I have been doing Tae kwon do at LMA for about 4 ½ years. I live in Renton with my Mom, Step Dad and 2 year old brother. One day I hope to become successful and I believe that Tae Kwon Do will help me get there.

I first came to LMA because I needed to find something to do in the time I had after school to keep me in shape. I wanted something unique to do because everyone plays football, baseball or soccer- but not everyone does TKD. My Mom and I went to a couple of different schools and we felt that LMA was the best choice out of all the schools in the area. When you walk through the doors of LMA there's just a feeling that you are welcome to come and train, learn, and most of all be a part of the family there- no matter who you are. Over the last several years I have been reminded over and over that we definitely made the best choice. At LMA the environment is just so friendly and welcoming- everyone helps one another and just around has a good time. It's truly a family.

When you come to Lee's you don't just come to work out, you come to learn about yourself. There is so much that you can learn-such as the Children's Home Rules that we have to memorize and abide by. Another thing that they teach you about is "Focus". There are three main things that we are taught to focus on, they are your mind, your eyes, and your body. So whenever I get off track I remind myself to focus all three of those things and get back to whatever I was doing. Without LMA I would have never known that trick.

TKD has changed my life forever. Not only have I worked hard physically, but I have also had to keep myself mentally focused on my goal. This has been difficult at times because sometimes that black belt seems so far away. You have to be determined to get there. So many times I wanted to stay home instead of coming to the hot dojang. After I came and finished class I felt good for continuing to work towards my goal. I always have a good time too. TKD has taught me to push through when my goal seems too hard, too far away, or maybe not interesting any longer. I will take these skills with me for the rest of my life.

All of the great people that I have met over the past few years have helped me to stay on my path toward black belt. I have made so many friends and truly feel that I have extended my family. Specifically I would like to thank:

- Robert for having such a great school and being an inspiration to all of us.
- Geoffrey for not letting me slide on my poomse and always making sure I am up to standards before I am allowed to take a promotion test. And also being so patient with all of us when we are learning to use our "focus muscle"
- Michael for being such a great example and always being available to give me extra help when I need it.

- Brian Sensenbach for being a great mentor and helping me stay on track during the LONG journey between bodan and black belt.
- To everyone else that has been my friend, team mate, or teacher. I hope to know you all for years to come.
- And finally a huge thank you to my parents – not only paying for me to train at LMA, but most of all for NEVER letting me quit, always being there to support me, drive me, and encourage me every step of the way.