

What Taekwon Do Means to Me

By Cath Tippett

This brief dissertation is about what Taekwon Do means to me personally. My involvement with Taekwon Do started some years ago when a family friend, Mark Leatham, recommended the Taranaki Taekwon Do club, and gave me the contact phone number for Neill Livingstone. I phoned Mr Livingstone, with the intent of enrolling our very boisterous son into the Kids Class, hoping some of the self-control and self discipline Mark had told us about would be picked up by Cameron. His younger sister Kaitlyn tagged along. This was the start of our family's association with Taranaki Taekwon Do and what a wonderful experience it has been and continues to be.



Picture to the left:

A picture of me winning "Student of the year 2008". To date this has been one of my proudest moments. It will only be surpassed when I get my Black Belt.

Once Cameron and Kaitlyn progressed through the Kids Class, Malcolm and myself then became involved. Primarily moved by the gentle coercion we received from the formidable Dale Copeland (a local TKD legend) and Frances Rookes, who lives just over the fence from us. To this mix was added our oldest daughter Laura for 18 months, before she set off to Auckland University. My sister-in-law in Auckland has been particularly keen to hear of our family progress in Taekwon Do as she is a avid practitioner in Karate, runs a self defence programme at her local secondary school where she teaches and holds a Dan III.

Taekwon Do has greatly influenced our family over the past six years. It has over this time, gone from being a sporting activity that my youngest children Cameron and Kaitlyn starting being involved with, to being a family activity that we have all become entranced with. It permeates our whole life. In fact the phase "whole life dedicated to Taekwon Do" can not be under-estimated. The tenets, *perseverance, courtesy, integrity, self-control* and *indomitable spirit* are core values that should be central to all mankind, regardless of creed or religious orientation. I hold them dear to my heart and hope that by adhering to them I will become a better person and a good role model for my children.

To me personally, Taekwon Do has been invaluable as a sport/activity that has provided me with a lot of focus. Focus not just in attending the classes and trying my best to keep up but in providing focus for my own mind and body as I participate in basics, in the step sparring, in patterns, self defence and the various other dynamic activities that are part of our discipline. My balance and flexibility still need a lot of work, but these are the two principle goals I have set myself to improve upon and to continue working towards.

At 52 years of age, I still struggle with some aspects of Taekwon Do. To me these add to the challenge and make me more determined to succeed. From time to time I have had to miss class due to injury or because of my involvement with Taranaki's swimming scene. However, I can truthfully tell you, every time I miss a training session, I really regret not being able to be there and interrogate the other family members who did attend so see what I missed out on. Probably my greatest regret is not becoming involved in TKD at a younger age but then I might not have met some of the most amazing people who are involved with the Taranaki Taekwon Do Club.

Taekwon Do is a fun activity. The Club is amazing and the people I have met are inspirational. Many have become personal friends who we see on a regular basis outside of class. When grading I know advise, support and assistance is given to me freely. This club is like an extension of my own family, it is full of smiling faces and true friends who will be around for my lifetime.



Tippett family photo of Malcolm, Cath, Cameron & Katllyn allgrading together in 2009. This collage was kindly made for our family by Neill & Kirsten Livingstone.