

# *TKD Black Belt Paper*

*by Layla Theriot*

On March 8th and 9th, 2013, I will be testing for my first degree black belt in Tae-Kwon-Do. Throughout most of my life, Tae-Kwon-Do has been one of the most important things to me, next to school, family, and friends. I have been in Tae-Kwon-Do for about six years and before that I was in kinder kicks for about a year or two. Because of this wonderful martial art, I have become stronger physically, and mentally. The world had become much more dangerous, and I'm glad that I can defend myself and others. I can't even imagine how different my life would be if I had never taken Tae-Kwon-Do.

When I was in the fourth grade, I was bullied quite a bit by most of my class, both emotionally and physically. I was very alone that year because that was the first year my best friend and I weren't in the same class. I only had one or two friends in my class of 25 to 30 kids. All of my other friends were in the other class and I only saw them about once a day. Soon enough, they all started to make new friends and I was pushed out of the picture a little. I felt rather isolated and that is when I started to be bullied. Usually, they would throw stuff at me, push me onto the floor, steal my stuff, and call me terrible names such as, wimp or stupid and sometimes even retarded. I used to think of that as one of the worst years of my life, but now I think of it as one of the greatest because that is the year I joined Tae-Kwon-Do.

My mother stepped in and tried to get the principal and teacher to do something, but they didn't seem to help very much. After that, my mother wanted me to join Tae-Kwon-Do with my sister because it had helped her a lot. So, I did. I really only wanted to learn how to defend myself, so I thought that if I took it for a couple of months, I would be ok and I could quit. But, that's definitely not what happened. I did learn to defend myself, but the more I learned, the more I wanted to stay and increase my knowledge.

When I was testing for yellow belt, Miranda was testing for her black belt. I remembered seeing all the amazing things she could do, and that is what really wanted motivated me to continue. After I decided to stay (after getting my yellow belt), that is where I really wanted to give up. I was a yellow belt for an entire year, and I started to feel bored and extremely disappointed. My parents told me I could always quit if I didn't like it anymore. Miranda kept telling me that I was very good I should have tested a long time ago and that I should keep trying. I stayed and I was to test after that long year, and things seemed to get better. Three months after I tested for yellow stripe, I tested for green, six months later I test for blue, six months again I tested for blue stripe, etc.

To be honest, I never expected to get this far... I never really imagined testing for my black belt. I never really thought too much of it either. When I was a red belt, I thought

to myself that I still have about a year and a half to two years before I test for black belt. Time went by way faster than I expected it too. I'm only two weeks away from testing. Now, time seems to be going rather slow and I feel like it'll never be March 8th or 9th.