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Taekwondo and My Life

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A symbol of OMAC Taekwondo is the “Guardian Of Peace”. It never really occurred to me what it represented. To an outsider, Taekwondo looks like it has no place for peace. It’s just fighting all the time, and seeing who has the strongest punch or the nicest block. If you ask me how I view Taekwondo, my response will be different. Sure, Taekwondo is about learning how to punch and kick, but it’s also about defending yourself and others, and not just through fighting. Taekwondo is about building character and having an appreciation for what you have. It’s taught me discipline, patience, and confidence- all traits I would never have figured out without Taekwondo.

Taekwondo is about finding your voice and figuring out what your role is in the world. The world is a big place, and while you can’t help everyone, touching the lives of a few is still better than helping no one. Whether you have to give a big speech or are saving the world from bad people, Taekwondo can help train you.

It starts with confidence. I started going to Taekwondo when I was 6. I was a small, timid, little girl who would just listen to everyone else. I never thought I had a say in anything, so I kept quiet. I admit, I am still a little shy, but Taekwondo helped me realise that I am so much more powerful than I thought I was. Not just physically, but verbally as well. Master Kim has shown me that I can change the world with my voice. He’s taught me that I can really do anything I want by speaking up. Master Kim has always told me that I can be so much more powerful with a loud voice, and he’s helped by making me have a loud yell whenever I punch or kick. He helped me gain the confidence I have today.

Taekwondo is partly about self defense. But, it’s not about hurting the other person. Even in one steps after we take the person down, we always have to help them up. We always start free sparring by bowing as a symbol of respect, and shake hands when we’re finished as a symbol of appreciation. So, Taekwondo is about respect and discipline.

Taekwondo has helped me in school, by teaching me to participate in class and appreciate the time and effort teachers put into our education every day. Sometimes I would find myself struggling in my classes. I would always blame it on my teachers. But when I started teaching at Taekwondo, I realized that the job of a teacher is far from easy. You have to figure out a way to ensure that kids learn stuff, and make it fun for them to learn. It can be really hard at times. So, teaching has taught me that I need to try my hardest to help those who need it. It’s also showed me that I need to have discipline and respect for everyone, no matter the age.

When I started, I had no idea I would learn this much. In fact, I just joined because my sister was doing it. It seemed like another fun thing to do with my friends. However, as I progressed through the belts I started becoming more and more serious about this sport. Sometimes, Taekwondo was one of the least of my interests. I wanted to do other things like go out with my friends. But instead I was at Taekwondo. Some days I felt so out of it, that it seemed that I had forgotten how to kick or do anything! I just wanted to be at home, curled up in my bed

watching my current favorite show on Netflix. But deep down I knew I had to attend. With the continuous encouragement and faith from my mother, I persevered. I realized more and more that every class can help me, even if it's just a simple comment made during free sparring. Although Master Kim has helped me immensely, he is not the only one. The other black belts have helped as well, giving me suggestions and comments about ways I can improve.

Taekwondo has also taught me how to be a leader. On Wednesdays and Fridays, I teach color belts their forms. It has made me feel like I am making an impact on other students lives. A few times I have had to lead class on Fridays. The experience is very different to teaching smaller color groups because there are a lot more students participating; some are older than me and some younger than me. I have had to lead everyone and it was really scary the first time I did it. I kept blanking on what I was supposed to do next, and how I was supposed to do it. Even though I knew everything by heart, and I knew everyone in the class, I was so nervous that I still messed up. However, I didn't feel totally lost. To my surprise, all the people around me were helping me out. Some people were just smiling at me and giving me thumbs ups, and others were actually whispering what came next. It can be intimidating going to lead the whole class, but Master Kim and the black belts have proved to me that it's okay if I mess up and that I can learn a lot from my mistakes.

Taekwondo has taught me that being strong doesn't mean beating people up. It means having discipline and respect towards others. Having confidence and using my words to fight rather than my hands. It means having peace and teaching others the right thing. It means being thankful for everything that I have. I am so thankful to have had the privilege of learning Taekwondo with Master Kim and OMAC because I have learned and accomplished so much.