

## MIND BODY & SOUL-- Taekwondo 2 XCELL

In the month of November 2011, my son, Phillip Daniel, surprised me with a recent copy of his student university newspaper, The Tech, at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) of which included his name in an article in the sports section entitled, "Taekwondo dominates at opening tournament." The article stated that on October 22, 2011, the MIT Sport Taekwondo Club hosted and competed in a major conference, the first Eastern Collegiate Taekwondo Conference (ECTC) tournament of the season, of which attracted over 420 competitors from 23 schools of which included the Division I rival Cornell University. The article stated that the 50 engineering team members were victorious and earned a first place finish. I was elated to read my son's name and see that he had taken first in the men's' sparring division. When I saw his achievement in the newspaper article, my mind immediately went back three years earlier, and to the day before Phillip left Durham, North Carolina, for college. I made a point to take him by to visit his first teacher in Tae Kwon Do, Master Michelle Gordon before his departure. The visit to the dojang gave me an incredible reassurance that I needed and a kind of feeling of support that no words can describe. When we arrived Phillip was presented with surprise gifts, a suitcase from a fellow student, Instructor William Adams, and other gifts and necessities from Maser Gordon, Master Caleb Bell and Instructor Edmond Bailey that he would need for college. We sat and reminisced for awhile with Master Gordon and the other students that Phillip knew since his beginning days in Taekwondo. I sat and listened to the advice my son was given by Instructor Edmond Bailey, a pharmaceutical graduate from Campbell University, a black belt and a professional in his career and who had studied under Master Gordon since he was young. My memory goes even further back fifteen years ago when I first moved to Durham, NC and when I initially enrolled my oldest son Shawn to be instructed under Master Gordon, and later when I enrolled Phillip. Because of her magnificent Tae Kwon Do program and incredible community outreach to youth, she became a solid foundation for my sons and a gateway that has caused them to build a strong sense of awareness and a strong character that has led them to want to succeed in many areas in life.

Because of little or no family support when my husband and I first came to Durham, NC, I went in search of an environment that could possibly help my sons fill a void in their life, and I found such a place in the dojang that was operated by Master Gordon. I was immediately introduced to some of her top students both young and old, such as Dr. Kenji Cunnion (a doctor of infectious disease in Pediatrics), Dr. Laura Kihlstrom (Anesthesiologist), Dr. Thuy Le (Plastic Surgeon), Yvonne Wright, a mother of two junior black belts, and a captain in the U.S. Air Force, Amy Reisinger (Pathologist), Nicholas Noschese, Edmond Bailey and his brothers, Ansel and Aaron, Caleb Bell, Zach and Max Dailey, Scoot Davis, Han Kim, Mark Brooks, and others. Over the years, I remember these students and inquire about their welfare, and I cherish them all for what they have instilled in my sons. I was absolutely amazed at how disciplined, routine, and professional the classes were conducted and the respect that each student was required to have towards one another. I was also impressed at such a diversity of students that were apart of this school as well as international students from different cultures and countries. There were African, Korean, Vietnamese, Russian, East Indian, Japanese, Hispanic, German, Yugoslavian, Serbian, Lithuanian, and Jewish students, so I looked forward to my sons becoming apart of this wonderful multicultural experience which has enriched their lives immensely and has given them a sense of appreciation to humanity as a whole. The friendships that my sons have made in Master Gordon's taekwondo program extends beyond the dojang and into the community, the public schools systems, and globally. We came to realize that we become apart of a much larger family. Master Gordon taught and fostered the kind of environment that not only stressed the importance of learning the art of Tae Kwon Do under a highly disciplined regiment but she proves that apart of that success includes being responsible in other areas such as in academics and in society.

Because of Master Gordon's amazing program, her ethics, her caring attitude, and her strategic efforts in the enrichment in the mind, body, and soul, I have witnessed so many of her students of whom have become successful in so many other areas in life, as well as achieving in Tae Kwon Do competitions. This experience has encouraged my sons over the years to strive for success and it has become a positive impact on their lives. My oldest son Shawn has recently received high honors as a second year transfer student to the aerospace engineering college at North Carolina State University (NCSU), he has maintained a high grade point average, and represents the top seven percent of honor students in the program, and I believe that his early experience in this Tae Kwon Do school continues to have a major and positive impact on his life today. Also when I hear about my son Phillip's past awards and achievements in the three years that he has been apart of the Tae Kwon Do Club at MIT and his recent mention in the student newspaper for first place, I cannot help but think about his beginnings with Master Gordon. My mind reflects upon the first time I heard the good news that my son received the Gates Millennium Scholarship (with the help of Master Gordon) and was offered a full scholarship from MIT. Since that time, he has maintained a high grade point average in the Mechanical Engineering College at this prestigious university. I have much confidence in Master Gordon's program and what she has to offer and I am excited and hopeful about the opening of the new dojang, Taekwondo 2 XCELL, under the instruction of Master Michelle Gordon and Master Caleb Bell. I wish them both much continued successes.

Kimberly Daniel  
EOG Math & Science Specialist,  
Primary & Middle School Level Education