



Dragon's Den

唐手道

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Journey of Fifty-Five Years

By Grandmaster Vaughn

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This newsletter features the Black Belt test, the Region 8 Fall Championship, updates on the Spring Valley YMCA program, Hapkido perspectives, a self-defense seminar, and a student essay!

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Upcoming events:

Nov. 28-29—Dojang Closed for Thanksgiving

Dec. 8—Vaughn's Holiday Party
Thru Dec. 12—Bethesda Project Collections



The 20th of October was a milestone anniversary for me of fifty plus years in practicing Tang Soo Do. I have lately been reflecting on events that have happened during my journey. I am happy to report that the time has been mostly very positive. I have met and trained with some very fine martial artists over the years. I believe that out of that group there were a few that really stood out as special.

The term "martial artist" is bantered around nowadays by persons who claim to be one, and yet don't really appreciate what it means to pursue an unattainable goal for a lifetime; to really seek perfection.

To really live *the life*, one must appreciate the value of correction and seek it through a mentor. The mentor needs to be someone the artist knows well and trusts. It really doesn't work any other way. It takes an artist who **wants** to do it right and welcomes correction by his/her mentor because he/she doesn't want to do it wrong. If the student feels he is not cared for, then he will lose respect, and the process will not

bring to fruition the desired goal of becoming a polished martial artist.

I think back to my early days when I was so drawn to the training and to the discipline it offered. It was a very primal force that beckoned me and promised me a better way to live after experiencing warfare. Not just discipline but self-discipline; being critical of oneself, not wanting to get it wrong and wanting to be the best.

I have tried hard to live by the golden rule and treat people like I want to be treated, to be honest, and to be trustworthy. I take my job very seriously and try to emulate what Grandmaster Shin taught us. I believe the relationship between instructor and student is meant to be a lifetime commitment on both sides.

Over the years, I have seen many come and go when it comes to walking the path of a warrior. Anyone who works toward a Black Belt wants to be a tough guy. It is much more than that. It also means to be able to follow orders from instructors and seniors; folks you know and trust, who have been walking the path longer than you.

A dojang is much like an Infantry Company in the Army. It has a commanding officer, other ranking officers, and assistants. It functions through a system called the "Chain of Command." Don't forget, it's called a martial art for a reason.

Do you consider your dobok a uniform or is it a costume? You should consider it a uniform. That means you are committed to a cause bigger than yourself.

(Continued on page 2)

Journey of Fifty-Five Years

(Continued from page 1)

The code of Instructor/student is that the student respects the Instructor and the Instructor cares for the student. If this code is not followed, then confusion will arise. It doesn't work for you if you cannot follow this rule. If you have problems following orders, you will drift from the path, and your journey shall be interrupted. A martial arts journey is like a fast-moving stream. If you leave the stream and go to shore, the water keeps on going. To get back to your training, you must get in the stream where you stepped out.

Working as an assistant and confidant of Grandmaster Shin gave me the privilege to study his method of leadership. I always considered myself to be a good and competent leader, but I learned from studying under KCN Shin, that I had so much more to learn.

I know that I still make mistakes, but that is what they are, mistakes. One cannot go back in time to fix whatever mistake has been made other than to admit it, apologize and try

to do better next time, but one can use that mistake to learn from and avoid the same mistake in the future. It is all part of the martial artist's path to enlightenment.

Teaching Tang Soo Do is an art and teaching it can be a way to really find out about yourself, about your strengths and about your weaknesses. Tang Soo Do offers much more to learn than just becoming a great fighter.

From my experience of all the attributes that TSD offers, learning to become a servant is of most importance. I believe that putting too much emphasis on the accumulation of higher rank can become a habit that is hard to break.

To achieve balance, one must train in mind, body and spirit. Concentration on only one or even two of these disciplines will cause imbalance and will slow you down in your quest for greatness.

When you look at organizational charts, they usually have the president or CEO at the top of the command structure, then the vice presidents and so on down to the worker. The structure I use for my dojang is a bit

different than the norm. I like to use an upside-down triangle, with me at the bottom, then come the instructors, then the Black Belts, then the students and then the community.

We should strive to be the best we can be, but don't you think that there is more to learn in TSD than just striving to be a great technician? I think there is more to learn and staying humble is at the top of the list. To become an instructor, maintaining humility is very important, especially when it comes to keeping students. KCN Shin was one of the best technicians I ever met, but along with that he was a very humble man, who always thought of others first. He was a Christian man, and humility was a staple of his charm and charisma. It led people to follow him and to stay with him.

The art of Tang Soo Do offers a disciplined life of constant improvement. Setting the right goals is vital to achieving excellence. I believe one of the most important goals to strive for is humility.

I am motivated to remember that the greatest warrior ever to live washed His disciples' feet.

Tang Soo Do Region 8 Fall Championship

By: Tanishi Choudhary, Cho Dan Bo

The Region 8 Fall Championship in the Poconos is a great event that brings together martial artists from all across the region to showcase their skills. This year's championship, held October 25-26, 2024, featured many dedicated competitors with good spirits, which defines Tang Soo Do.

Event Highlights

Grandmaster Vaughn's speech and signing: One of the main highlights of this year's event was Grandmaster Vaughn's speech about his journey in Tang Soo Do. He shared many of his experiences, inspiring the many participants there. During the competition, Grandmaster Vaughn signed the dobok and belts of many competitors.

Creativity Teams Demo: On October 26, the creativity teams from the many dojangs in the region performed a demo. It showcased the hard work each team put in to perform in front of the participants and judges. Each demo had a special theme

featuring creativity and effort.

Forms Competition: The forms (hyung) competition is one of the most important parts of the competition. Students from Tiny Tigers to Black Belts participate in it, showcasing the mastery and effort of each participant. It gives a chance for each competitor to receive feedback from the judges, helping them improve their skills and promoting personal growth and discipline.

Weapons Competition: Competitors from brown belt and higher can participate in the weapons competition. Weapons enhance martial artists' skills while still honoring the tradition and culture of Tang Soo Do. It motivates them to try harder and set personal goals.

Sparring Competition: Sparring competition helps competitors apply their techniques in a controlled environment. Sparring is an essential part of practicing Tang Soo Do and developing personal growth. It

provides a strong sense of sportsmanship while fostering confidence and resilience.

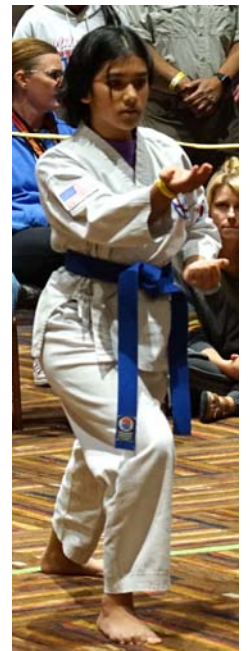
Awards and Recognition

At the end of the competition in your ring, the judges hand out medals to the winners of each competition I mentioned above. It promotes the importance of perseverance and hard work. The Demo Teams also get team/group awards based on their performance. It promotes the importance of perseverance and teamwork.

Conclusion

Overall, the Region 8 Fall Championship is a great experience every student should have. Everyone is invited, from Tiny Tigers to Black Belts. After the competition, you can enjoy the Kalahari Waterpark and Arcade. The next year's championship is already being looked forward to, a gathering of the martial artists from Region 8.

Region 8 Fall Championship



Region 8 Fall Championship



Region 8 Fall Championship



Region 8 Fall Championship—
Tiny Tiger's Perspective
By Siyona Singh, Age 6

I participated in region 8 fall championship in kalahari poconos. It was a fun event. I met a lot of new people and made few new friends. I competed in the tiny tiger category, in which I performed the first form and also did sparring. The instructors were nice and helpful. I got my first medal. I enjoyed it a lot and looking forward for the next event.

By: Siyona



My Black Belt Test

By Shaurya Mahajan, Cho Dan

I think everyone should experience something like the Black Belt test. It was one of the most challenging yet meaningful experiences in my life.

I started preparing for the Black Belt test a few weeks in advance, running through all my forms and one steps, and making sure I was 100% confident in everything. One thing that I needed to work on was extending my legs during the jump kicks, so I stretched my legs every day. I also made sure to drink a lot of water during the week leading up to test day to ensure that I did not get dehydrated during the test. I practiced and practiced until I was confident in all of my forms and one-steps. The thing I was still most worried about was jump kicks, so I made sure to practice those in the few minutes before class started at the dojang. I also had to study for the written test that I would be taking a few weeks before my test.

Finally, the time for the written test came. I felt well-prepared for the test because I had used the online study resources as well as read over my gup manual every night. This is a really good strategy for anyone taking the test because you absorb information better if you sleep after you learn it. I went to the dojang, making sure to bring my phone as a backup device in case my Chromebook did not work. Thankfully, it did, and I completed and passed my written test.

Now it was crunch time; I started practicing all my techniques more frequently as the test day approached. On the day of the test, I showed up 30 minutes early so that I could get in a little



bit of review with my peers right before the test. Then, the test started with a physical round. Since I had been practicing my push-ups for a while before the test, the physical round was not very difficult the first time. We started with hand and foot drill, and I saw some combinations that I had not seen before. I made sure to take it slow to start so I was doing the techniques correctly, and I sped up as I became more confident. We then paired up with partners and started doing jump kicks. Luckily, we did not perform that many kinds of kicks, but it was still 10 each leg and probably the most difficult part of the test. I started to get a little dizzy from all the jump kicks, but then, quicker than I thought it would be, we moved on to forms. I felt that I did well with my open-hand forms, but my weapons forms still needed a lot more work. We moved on to one-steps, and I had a good partner, so I felt I did pretty well in that. I also did self-defense and did well on that. We then moved on to break falls, and the hardest part there was probably doing my front roll with my non-dominant hand. If you are about to test, make sure you practice this. Then it was time for breaking. This was probably the thing I was most nervous about because I have had trouble breaking in the past. However, I broke all my boards—a 2 board spinning back kick, and a chop as well as a hook kick. With the hook kick, I

made sure to swing my arms a little before doing the kick to build up some speed and power. We also had more physical rounds, and while it was much harder the second and third times, I was still able to complete it and stay in time with everyone else.

I would say the most important part of taking the Black Belt test is to remember what it took to get there. People practice for a very long time to get to this level, and most don't make it, but there I was. After the test, I reflected on all the time I had spent doing karate. It has been one of the most important things in my life, especially recently, and taught me many valuable life lessons such as respect, focus, and discipline. I also started to overthink every tiny mistake I had made and weighed the impact of those mistakes on whether I had passed or not. Eventually, Mr. Mentley told me I passed the test! I am very excited to continue in karate and learn all the new techniques I can learn now! I think it is important to thank all the people who helped me reach this point, such as Mr. and Mrs. Mentley, Mr. Clark, and anyone who has ever corrected me or helped me in any way to improve in Tang Soo Do. I would also like to thank Grandmaster Vaughn and my parents. I am so excited to continue my Tang Soo Do journey as a Black Belt and improve even more!

Tang Soo!



Sprouting up at Spring Valley: The Story of Our Karate Studio's Growth

By Ryan James Clark, E Dan

Just as a farmer begins with a single seed and a vision for a thriving orchard, so too were the modest and humble beginnings of Vaughn's Dojang II – Spring Valley. Like any good farmers, we knew that building something truly fruitful would require patience, dedication, and careful nurturing. What started as a small program with a handful of eager students has blossomed into a vibrant and integral part of the curriculum at the Spring Valley YMCA, representing a unique branch of our growing orchard and dojang.

So skilled and learned a man must be to become a farmer, a teacher, a leader, a master, and a Grandmaster. Grandmaster Vaughn is well versed in the art behind growing a successful orchard, bearing many fruits, from the likes of our many regional and national award winners, to the very involved and stellar academic youth, our many scholars, historians, physicians, and core of great individuals and Black Belts. The framing and the nurturing of these noble souls has been the product of carefully planned leadership and execution. The efforts of many have contributed to the continued success of our school, but it is only under the direction of Grandmaster Vaughn and through his vision, interpersonal skills, and respect for communities, that it is possible. This foundation, this core set of values, deep rooted in the community, is the tree that stands with the changing seasons, and withstands the shifting winds of change, adapting to new opportunities.

In the earlier days, our Spring Valley studio was much like a seedling in rich soil—full of potential, but fragile. The first students who joined us were like the first rays of sunlight that kiss the earth in

spring, bringing warmth and energy. With each lesson, each practice, we watered their passion, instilling in them the discipline and respect that are the roots of karate. Slowly but surely, we saw our dojang grow stronger, just as a young sapling stands taller with every passing day. Three became 4, 4 became 7, and then 11. To date we have amassed 22 regular active students, doubling our numbers in just 9 months. As more students joined, it was like new shoots sprouting from the base of the tree. They came from different backgrounds, experience levels, and motivating factors but all were drawn to the same light—the promise of personal growth and mastery through dedicated hard work.

Started about 2 years ago, the program at Spring Valley has amassed new levels of interest and support. On the



heels of a world reeling from 2020, and the uncertainty that followed, we now truly have secured a location that both fills a need within a community and is primed for even more growth. Now, as we look around, our dojang is an orchard in full bloom. The oft-empty multi-purpose room is now filled with the laughter, focus, and dedication of students of all ages. Each class presents measurable growth, where students challenge themselves, develop their skills, and bear the fruit of their hard work. Some are just beginning their journey, like buds on a branch, while others, like our advanced students, have matured into strong, more confident practitioners—our orchard's tallest trees, offering shade and guidance to the newcomers. We can thank the likes of Mr. Robertson, Ms. Sahu, Mr. Khambhati, Mr. Fitzgerald, and of course myself.

(Continued on page 9)

Spring Valley Studio

(Continued from page 8)

But like any good farmer knows, the work is never done. The growth of our karate studio is a continuous cycle, a living, breathing orchard that will keep expanding as long as we tend to it. We remain committed to our roots, ensuring that every new student who walks through

our doors receives the same care, attention, and guidance that our founding students did. I represent the younger less experienced but qualified farmer who has grandiose ideas and unique approaches to solving the many needs and problems. I come with more modernized approaches to tending to the tedious nature of our harvesting, but aware and respectful of the tradition behind the art we teach.

In this ever-expanding orchard of martial arts, we welcome you to join us—whether you are a seed ready to sprout or a tree eager to share your wisdom. Together, we will continue to grow, lesson by lesson, season by season, year by year, and build a legacy of strength, respect, and community, all in pursuit of becoming one with nature.

NCL Self-Defense Session

By Aarya Bhoir, Sam Dan

When my friend approached me in statistics class a few weeks ago, I honestly thought she was going to ask me questions about our homework. I didn't expect her to request a self-defense session not unlike the ones our studio holds annually for Methacton Junior Girls, which she previously participated in. She told me that she was a member of the local chapter of the National Charity League (NCL), an organization based on community involvement, especially for mothers and their children. One of the goals of the NCL this year is promoting awareness on self-defense, hence why my friend asked me if we could organize a clinic. Of course, I said yes.

how to escape wrist grabs with the use of gravity, as well as getting out of bear hugs. Finally, NCL members are very vocal; I was pleasantly surprised by how loud the studio had gotten as the girls struck at targets with strong ki-haps.

As always, the girls' enjoyed the last minutes of the session the most. This was the first session I have run where every participant volunteered to break a board. Almost all of the individuals broke on their first attempt, as well. Overall, it was clear the girls were entertained

by the clinic and had taken away a few lessons from it (for once, the majority of the group walked out of the session without looking down immediately at their phones!). Jokes aside, I heard back from my friend the next day, and she had nothing but gratitude for the program.

This session, I would like to point out, was the first time I had completely led a self-defense clinic. It is much easier to instruct a class of familiar students than a group of teenage girls (most of whom I've never met). Nonetheless, I am glad I had the chance to instruct a lesson and to step a little ways out of my comfort zone. I look forward to more community service opportunities like this one.

Tang Soo!



So, on Sunday, October 6th, I had the opportunity to teach a group of NCL members basic self-defense with the assistance of Miss Voight and Mr. Bhoir. Like the Methacton Clinic, we reviewed situational awareness practices and maintaining personal space with the girls, all of whom were incredibly enthusiastic and responsive. We went over basic counter attacks such as hammer fists and palm and knee strikes. Our guests learned



Holiday Bethesda Annual Project— Helping Those in Need

By Master Altieri

"You have two hands, one for helping yourself and the other for helping others."
- Audrey Hepburn

This year will be our 23rd year that we have helped collect items for those in need in the Philadelphia area. Grandmaster Vaughn has spoken many times about the importance of being a better person and the many ways you can accomplish this goal. One way is to truly help others as we have done every year through the annual Bethesda Project collection.

The Bethesda Project is a nonprofit organization that provides shelter, housing, and supportive services across 12 locations to adults experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia. The following are the items they are in need of again this year:

- Men's large and extra-large underwear
- Men's large and extra-large long underwear
- Large and extra-large gloves and sweatshirts
- Men's large jeans and socks
- Shower shoes
- Soap, deodorant, shaving cream, and disposable razors
- \$5 gift cards for Wawa, CVS, or Dunkin

Please start giving your items to your instructor or place the items in the box at the Audubon studio. If you prefer to donate money, Master Altieri will

purchase the items that are most needed. Your donated items will be delivered to the Bethesda Project around December 12th.

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin." - Mother Teresa



Testing Your Knowledge

By Scott Thompson, Sah Dan



1. The Korean command to come to attention is...
 - a. Ba Ro
 - b. Shio
 - c. Cha Ryut
 - d. Muk Yum
2. Which is one of the Five Codes of Tang Soo Do?
 - a. Loyalty to country
 - b. All-out effort
 - c. Integrity
 - d. Sincerity
3. In the Korean flag, the three solid bars represent...
 - a. Fire
 - b. Earth
 - c. Water
 - d. Heaven
4. The 2nd code of Tang Soo Do is...
 - a. Respect and obedience
 - b. Obedience to parents
 - c. Loyalty to country
 - d. No Retreat in Battle
5. What is the Korean term for the missing number in the sequence..."Hana, Tul, Set, _____, Tasot."
 - a. Yasot
 - b. Yodol
 - c. Ahop
 - d. Net
6. What number comes next in the sequence..."Il, E, Sam, Sah, Oh, Yuk, Chil, Pal..."
 - a. Ku
 - b. Ahop
 - c. Sip
 - d. Yasot
7. Grandmaster J.C. Shin was honored by being the subject of a full chapter in the martial arts book...
 - a. Mooyae Dobo Tongji
 - b. The Art of War
 - c. 20th Century Warriors
 - d. Tae Kwon Do Times
8. When Grandmaster Shin first came to the United States, it was as a representative of the Korean _____ Association.
 - a. Tang Soo Do
 - b. Soo Bahk Do
 - c. Soo Bahk Ki
 - d. Moo Duk Kwan
9. The two kick techniques in Bassai are Phakeso Ahnu Ro Cha Ki and...
 - a. Dwi Tollyo Cha Ki
 - b. Ahp Cha Ki
 - c. Tollyo Cha Ki
 - d. Yup Cha Ki
10. Jok Ki refers to...
 - a. Kick techniques
 - b. Energy
 - c. Axe kick
 - d. Hand techniques

Answers: 1. c 2. a 3. d 4. b 5. d 6. a 7. c 8. b 9. d 10. a

KIDS

IDS

KIDS

D
I
K

Kids' Corner

Korean Terminology Word Search

By Priyanshi Kumar, Cho Dan

Translate the words below the word search from English to Korean. Then try to find them in the puzzle below! The words can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal. Good Luck.

W	X	C	D	U	B	Z	R	D	X	T	J	D	X	D	M	M	T	Q	G
R	D	P	D	O	Y	G	M	P	Q	H	A	J	N	X	U	M	A	T	S
V	O	H	A	W	J	X	G	B	Z	J	A	S	A	X	Z	B	N	B	V
M	B	R	R	H	I	A	H	D	I	Y	F	N	O	H	S	T	G	S	E
F	O	Y	G	L	L	R	N	F	Z	L	J	Y	A	T	T	P	S	H	B
T	H	C	Z	A	G	Y	O	G	W	S	U	K	F	K	X	X	O	I	A
H	K	G	I	B	W	M	J	T	M	E	T	A	E	D	X	Y	O	J	R
D	E	E	N	G	H	U	C	H	O	O	N	B	E	E	V	M	D	A	O
D	Z	O	N	P	O	W	W	Y	E	R	D	C	R	L	D	G	O	K	I
U	P	X	D	H	Y	U	N	G	O	F	A	W	L	S	A	G	E	J	C

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| - Arm | - Turn around |
| - The number one | - Belt |
| - The number five | - Training hall |
| - The martial art we are learning | - Training uniform |
| - Ready (a motion and command) | - Forms |
| - Return (said at the start and end of class) | |
| - Start (said by the judge of sparring rings) | |

(See answers on page 18 if you need help with the translations.)

Congratulations!

To Our Newest Cho Dan Bos:

Advaith Balachandar

Vedant Sharma

To the following new and recently promoted Black Belts:

Cho Dan

Reyansh Gautam
Nirupam Jayadevan
Eva Kansal
Priyanshi Kumar
Shaurya Mahajan
Lindsay Shoemaker
Charvani Velaga

E Dan

Atiksh Singh

Sam Dan

Dung Hoang

Cho Dan (Hapkido)

Isabelle Voight
John Williams



To the following Spirit Belt recipients:

Audubon Dojang
Phoenixville YMCA
Spring Valley YMCA

Maddie Bell Vidhu Dadi
Advaith Dhanemkula
Caleb Jackson

And to the Region 8 Humanitarian of the Year Recipient:

Master Altieri

What Hapkido Means to Me

By John Williams, Cho Dan in Sin Moo Hapkido

Way of harmonious spirit, right? The Korean version of aikido (Japanese). Not quite, but similar styles and origins. I tried that for 6 months when it was 5 minutes from my old apartment, being a bit of a Steven Seagal fan. I watched a lot of action movies growing up, usually with dad. He'd come back from Blockbuster with a family movie or new release and "another karate movie" in mom's words. I always enjoyed and appreciated movies focused on martial arts, especially The Karate Kid (and Kobra Kai), Kickboxer, Bloodsport, American Ninja, 3 Ninjas, Ninja Turtles, anything Seagal, Van Damme, Chan, or Norris, etc. Yes, I did eventually see Enter the Dragon.

I can also reminisce about my time in an informal college martial arts club, where I was introduced to hapkido as 1 of 3 primary styles taught by a Canadian special forces military veteran bounty

hunter who assured us it was a tried-and-true synthesis often taught to police in seminars by his instructor.

Since then I have trained most in capoeira, but I believe hapkido is more practical in most fights—stay in close, take control, and end it quick—whereas capoeira speaks of a game (jogo) and dialogue, which is no denigration to capoeira. It's supposed to have the most powerful (F/t), as opposed to most forceful (F), kick in the S-batido (Chapeu de Couro), and teaches timing and distance. All martial arts have value, many moves overlap between styles, and some are better for certain bodies or personalities, and some, like capoeira, wushu, or aikido seem to emphasize the *art* (culture, music, dance...) while others, like muay thai, kenpo, krav maga, or even hapkido seem to emphasize *martial*. Judo for sport, kendo for weapons, jiu-jitsu for

grappling after a takedown (especially the Brazilian variety), and tang soo do to stay on your feet, etc.

A lot of why I train is that body control is a form of self-control and discipline, and as a Christian, I recognize it as another area or means to develop those. It's also good to have control when you have to defend yourself. I've never been in a physical fight (besides with siblings or cousins), and I think that's partly because you learn prudence, self-control... some of the other tenets of tang soo do I'm still absorbing by dojang osmosis, and also because if people recognize you're ready for a fight, they don't start one. Even for my army training the point is to be ready for it—and soak up the other physical and social benefits of training in the meantime.

Black Belt Promotions Ceremony



Several Participants in the Region 8 Fall Championship Show Off Their Medals and the Creativity Team Trophy and Banner

My Tang Soo Do Journey to Sam Dan

By Dung L. Hoang, Sam Dan

Editor's Note: Mr. Hoang prepared this essay for his Sam Dan requirement. It is being reprinted with his permission.



1. Introduction

Reflecting on my Tang Soo Do journey fills me with a deep sense of accomplishment and gratitude. What began as a simple interest in martial arts has blossomed into a profound family tradition. Despite my children, Anthony and Emily, suspending their training about 18 months ago, my commitment to Tang Soo Do remains unwavering. As I prepare for my advancement to 3rd degree Black Belt, I am filled with anticipation and determination, reflecting on the journey that has brought me here. This journey has been a path of personal growth, physical development, and an enduring connection to a supportive community that feels like family.

Tang Soo Do has provided a framework for continuous self-improvement and a foundation for leading a disciplined, balanced life. The art's emphasis on respect, perseverance, and integrity resonates deeply with me, influencing various aspects of my daily life. As I look back on the years of training, the milestones achieved, and the challenges overcome, I am reminded of the transformative power of martial arts. This essay aims to encapsulate the essence of my journey, highlighting the pivotal moments and the invaluable lessons learned along the way.

2. Early Days and Initial Challenges

My journey started one Saturday morning at the Phoenixville YMCA, where a group of young martial artists demonstrated Tang Soo Do forms and board breaking. The discipline and skill displayed by children as young as six impressed me, and I decided to enroll my son, Anthony. Although his initial attempts were met with challenges, we persevered. My early experiences in the dojang, under the guidance of Master Painter and Master Lipstein, were both humbling and invigorating. The initial soreness and stiffness gradually gave way to increased flexibility and stamina.

Training in Tang Soo Do for the first time after a long hiatus was challenging. I had practiced Taekwondo during my college years but had stopped due to the demands of my studies, and later, my career and family. Returning to martial arts at the age of 46 was daunting, especially balancing it with my responsibilities as a husband and father. However, the structured training and supportive environment at Vaughn's Dojang made the transition smoother.

The first few classes were particularly tough. My body, unaccustomed to the rigorous physical activity, protested with soreness and stiffness. Each kick, punch, and form were a reminder of muscles long forgotten. Yet, with each class, I felt my body slowly adapting. The soreness gradually diminished, replaced by a newfound agility and strength. These early challenges taught me the importance of perseverance and patience, qualities that would prove invaluable throughout my Tang Soo Do journey.

Moreover, the initial stages of training also tested my mental resolve. Balancing family, work, and training required careful time management and prioritization. There were moments when fatigue from work and home responsibilities made it tempting to skip a class, but the desire to improve and set a positive example for my children kept me motivated. Each class became a small victory, reinforcing my commitment to the art and its benefits.

3. Family Involvement and Growth

When my son, Anthony, and I began our Tang Soo Do training, it wasn't long before my daughter Emily expressed interest in joining us. Despite initial concerns about her readiness, she quickly adapted and embraced the training. Watching my children grow and progress in their martial arts journey was immensely rewarding. Training together allowed us to support and motivate each other, creating a unique and strong family dynamic.

Family involvement in Tang Soo Do enriched our lives in ways I hadn't anticipated. It provided a common goal and a shared activity that strengthened our bonds. Initially, Emily was hesitant, but her determination shone through. Her perseverance and eventual enthusiasm for Tang Soo Do mirrored Anthony's earlier journey. As a parent, watching my children develop skills, discipline, and confidence through martial arts was deeply fulfilling.

Our training sessions were not just

about learning martial arts; they were also about spending quality time together. The dojang became a place where we could bond, share experiences, and support each other's growth. There were moments of frustration, especially when balancing parental instincts with the need to let the instructors guide their progress. However, these experiences taught us patience and trust, reinforcing the values of respect and discipline that Tang Soo Do embodies.

The shared journey also fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's strengths and weaknesses. We celebrated each other's successes and provided encouragement during challenging times. This mutual support extended beyond the dojang, positively influencing our relationships at home. The discipline and respect learned in Tang Soo Do were mirrored in our daily interactions, creating a harmonious family environment.

Participating in Tang Soo Do as a family allowed us to set collective goals and work towards them together. Achieving milestones, such as new belt ranks, became family celebrations. These shared achievements not only boosted our individual confidence but also strengthened our sense of unity. The experience of progressing together in Tang Soo Do has created a lasting bond that we cherish deeply.

4. Advancing Through Ranks

Advancing through the ranks of Tang Soo Do has been a journey of dedication and hard work. From the initial white belt to achieving Cho Dan Bo, each step has been marked by rigorous training and personal growth. The sense of accomplishment I felt upon reaching Cho Dan Bo was unparalleled, akin to the pride I felt upon completing my university degrees. Witnessing Anthony and Emily achieve this milestone at a young age filled me with pride and reaffirmed the value of our shared journey.

The journey from white belt to Cho Dan Bo was marked by numerous milestones, each representing a significant step in our martial arts development. The physical training was intense, requiring consistent effort and practice. Forms, one-steps, self-defense techniques, and sparring sessions were all part of the curriculum, each designed to enhance our skills and build our confidence.

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Mental discipline was equally important. Learning to focus, maintain composure, and push through fatigue were essential lessons. The journey was not without its setbacks. There were times when progress seemed slow, and the challenges appeared insurmountable. However, these moments taught us resilience and the importance of perseverance. Each belt earned was a testament to our hard work and commitment.

Advancing through the ranks also meant increased responsibilities and expectations. Higher belt levels required a deeper understanding of Tang Soo Do principles and a greater proficiency in techniques. This progression demanded a more disciplined approach to training, incorporating regular practice outside of scheduled classes. The journey from white belt to Cho Dan Bo instilled in us a strong work ethic and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Additionally, the rank advancements brought a sense of accountability. As higher-ranking students, we became role models for newer students, setting an example through our conduct and dedication. This responsibility reinforced the importance of humility, respect, and the continual pursuit of excellence. The journey through the ranks was not just about personal achievement but also about contributing positively to the dojang community.

5. Mental and Physical Benefits

The physical benefits of Tang Soo Do are evident in my improved flexibility, coordination, and stamina. More importantly, the mental and emotional growth I have experienced is profound.

Tang Soo Do has taught me discipline, patience, and resilience. These qualities have not only enhanced my martial arts practice but have also positively influenced my professional and personal life. For instance, the focus and perseverance I developed through Tang Soo Do helped me navigate the challenges of a new job and the stress of moving to a larger home.

Physically, Tang Soo Do has kept me fit and agile. The rigorous training routines have improved my cardiovascular health, strength, and flexibility. The various kicks, punches, and forms require precise movements, enhancing coordination and balance. As I progressed through the ranks, I noticed a significant improvement in my overall physical condition. The aches and pains that initially plagued me became less frequent, replaced by a sense of vitality and energy.

Mentally, Tang Soo Do has been transformative. The discipline required in training sessions has spilled over into other areas of my life. The focus and concentration needed to learn and execute techniques have sharpened my cognitive abilities. This mental clarity has been beneficial in my professional life, helping me manage stress and make better decisions. The principles of Tang Soo Do, such as perseverance and respect, have also enriched my personal interactions, making me a more patient and empathetic individual.

Tang Soo Do has also provided a valuable outlet for stress relief. The physical exertion of training sessions serves as a way to release tension and clear the mind. The meditative aspects of forms and breathing exercises help to center the mind, promoting a sense of calm and focus. This balance between physical activity and mental clarity has significantly enhanced my overall wellbeing.

The mental discipline developed through Tang Soo Do has improved my problem-solving skills and decision-making abilities. The practice of analyzing techniques, understanding their applications, and refining their execution has translated into a more analytical and methodical approach in my professional life. The ability to remain calm under pressure, a skill honed through martial arts training, has been particularly valuable in high-stress situations.

The emotional resilience gained from Tang Soo Do has also had a profound impact on my personal relationships. The practice of maintaining composure and focusing on solutions rather than problems has improved my interactions with family, friends, and colleagues. The principles of respect and empathy, central to Tang Soo Do, have guided my approach to conflict resolution and fostered more harmonious relationships.

Furthermore, the sense of accomplishment from progressing in Tang Soo Do has boosted my self-confidence. Each new belt and mastered technique is a reminder of what can be achieved through dedication and hard work. This confidence extends beyond the dojang, influencing my approach to challenges in all areas of life. The belief in my ability to overcome obstacles and achieve goals has become a fundamental part of my mindset.

6. Community and Dojang Culture

One of the most enriching aspects of my Tang Soo Do journey has been the sense of community at Vaughn's Dojang. The camaraderie and support from fellow students and instructors have made the dojang feel like an extension of my family. Memorable events, such as the Region 8

Adult Black Belt Clinic, have reinforced the importance of community in martial arts. The rigorous training sessions, combined with the social gatherings, have created lasting bonds and a deep sense of belonging.

The community at Vaughn's Dojang is unique. It is a place where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together, united by their passion for Tang Soo Do. The instructors, led by Grandmaster Vaughn, have created an environment that is both challenging and nurturing. Their guidance and encouragement have been instrumental in my growth as a martial artist.

The friendships formed within the dojang are invaluable. Training alongside others who share the same goals creates a strong sense of camaraderie. We celebrate each other's achievements and support one another through challenges. The shared experiences, whether during intense training sessions or at social events, have created bonds that extend beyond the dojang. Vaughn's Dojang is not just a place to learn martial arts; it is a community that fosters personal growth and mutual support.

The sense of belonging and mutual respect within the dojang is a testament to the leadership and values instilled by the instructors. The emphasis on respect, discipline, and perseverance creates an environment where everyone feels valued and supported. This positive atmosphere enhances the learning experience, making each training session enjoyable and fulfilling.

Additionally, the dojang community has provided opportunities for leadership and personal development. As a higher-ranking student, I have had the privilege of assisting in classes and mentoring newer students. These roles have allowed me to develop my leadership skills and contribute to the growth and development of others. The sense of fulfillment derived from helping others progress in their Tang Soo Do journey is immense.

The dojang culture also promotes a sense of accountability and responsibility. As part of a larger community, we are encouraged to uphold the values of Tang Soo Do in our actions and interactions. This sense of accountability extends beyond the dojang, influencing our behavior in everyday life. The principles of respect, integrity, and perseverance become guiding forces in our personal and professional endeavors.

The community at Vaughn's Dojang has provided a support system that extends beyond martial arts. The friendships and connections formed within the dojang have become a source of

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encouragement and support in various aspects of life. Whether celebrating achievements, offering a listening ear, or providing advice, the dojang community is always there, reinforcing the sense of belonging and mutual respect.

7. Black Belt Testing and Achievements

The journey to Cho Dan was a significant milestone in my Tang Soo Do practice. The preparation for the Black Belt test was intense, involving both physical and mental challenges. The written test, with its 100 multiple-choice questions, tested my knowledge and understanding of Tang Soo Do principles. The physical test, with its demanding drills and forms, pushed my limits. However, the sense of achievement upon passing the test and receiving my Black Belt was unparalleled. It was a proud moment not only for me but also for my family and dojang community.

The Black Belt test was a culmination of years of hard work and dedication. The preparation involved rigorous training, both physically and mentally. The written test was comprehensive, covering various aspects of Tang Soo Do history, philosophy, and techniques. It required thorough preparation and a deep understanding of the art.

The physical test was equally demanding. The drills, forms, and sparring sessions were designed to test endurance, technique, and mental fortitude. The most challenging part for me was the jump kick drill, which pushed me to my physical limits. However, the support from my instructors and fellow students, along with my own determination, helped me persevere.

Passing the Black Belt test was a moment of immense pride and satisfaction. It was a testament to the countless hours of practice and the unwavering support of my family and dojang community. The promotion ceremony, where I received my Black Belt, was a celebration of this achievement. It was a recognition of the journey I had undertaken and the milestones I had reached.

Receiving my Black Belt was not the end of the journey but the beginning of a new chapter. The rank of Cho Dan represents a commitment to continuous learning and improvement. It is a reminder that martial arts is a lifelong journey, with each new rank bringing new challenges and opportunities for growth. The sense of accomplishment from achieving Cho Dan has fueled my motivation to pursue higher ranks and deepen my understanding of Tang Soo

Do.

The journey to Cho Dan also taught me valuable lessons about perseverance and resilience. The preparation required a high level of commitment and the ability to push through physical and mental barriers. The experience of overcoming these challenges has strengthened my resolve and confidence, instilling a belief in my ability to achieve difficult goals. These lessons extend beyond martial arts, influencing my approach to challenges in all areas of life.

Furthermore, achieving Cho Dan has reinforced the importance of setting and pursuing long-term goals. The journey from white belt to Black Belt was a multi-year commitment that required consistent effort and dedication. This experience has taught me the value of perseverance and the rewards of sustained effort. It has also provided a framework for approaching other long-term goals, both personal and professional, with a similar mindset of dedication and resilience.

8. Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, disrupting our daily lives and routines. However, Tang Soo Do provided a sense of normalcy and stability during these uncertain times. Vaughn's Dojang quickly adapted to online training, allowing us to continue our practice from home. This adaptation was crucial in maintaining our physical and mental health. The discipline and structure of Tang Soo Do helped us cope with the stress and isolation of the pandemic, reinforcing the importance of martial arts in our lives.

The pandemic imposed significant changes on our training routines. The closure of the dojang and the shift to online classes were initially challenging. Training at home required adjustments, both in terms of space and mindset. However, the resilience and adaptability instilled by Tang Soo Do helped us navigate these changes. The online classes, though different from in-person sessions, provided a much-needed outlet for physical activity and mental focus.

Tang Soo Do also played a crucial role in maintaining our mental well-being during the pandemic. The structure and discipline of regular training sessions provided a sense of normalcy amidst the chaos. The physical exercise helped alleviate stress and anxiety, while the sense of community, even through virtual interactions, offered support and encouragement. The pandemic highlighted the importance of martial arts not just as a physical activity, but as a holistic practice that supports overall well-being.

The challenges posed by the

pandemic also reinforced the importance of adaptability and resilience, qualities that are central to Tang Soo Do. The ability to maintain training and progress despite the disruptions required creativity and determination. The lessons learned during this period have strengthened my resolve and commitment to Tang Soo Do, proving that the principles of the art are applicable in all aspects of life.

The pandemic emphasized the value of community and support. The efforts of Vaughn's Dojang to maintain connections and provide continuous training opportunities, even remotely, showcased the dedication of the instructors and the strength of the community. This unwavering support was a source of inspiration and motivation, helping us stay connected and engaged during a challenging time.

9. Continuing the Journey: From E Dan to Sam Dan and Beyond

The journey from Cho Dan to E Dan was marked by increased challenges and deeper learning. Achieving E Dan was a significant milestone, representing my continued dedication to Tang Soo Do. The training involved refining techniques, enhancing physical conditioning, and deepening my understanding of the art's principles. This period was also marked by a growing sense of responsibility, both towards my own practice and towards the Tang Soo Do community.

As I prepare for my advancement to Sam Dan, I reflect on the rigorous and fulfilling journey from E Dan to this point. The path to Sam Dan has required an even higher level of commitment, pushing my physical and mental limits. Advanced techniques demand precision and a deeper understanding of the martial art, while the physical conditioning has become more demanding, requiring greater strength, flexibility, and endurance.

The mental preparation for Sam Dan has been equally important. This stage of the journey requires a profound sense of focus and resilience. Moments of doubt and fatigue have been frequent, but the support from my instructors and the camaraderie of my fellow students have been instrumental in maintaining my motivation. The sense of community within the dojang continues to be a source of strength, as we all work towards our individual goals while supporting each other.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my journey to Sam Dan has been the opportunity to give back by instructing students. Teaching has provided me with a deeper appreciation of Tang Soo Do and its principles. It has also allowed me to assess my own techniques critically,

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ensuring that I not only perform them correctly but can also convey their nuances to others. Instructing students has been a humbling and fulfilling experience, reinforcing the importance of patience, clear communication, and empathy.

Sharing my knowledge and experiences with newer students has been incredibly rewarding. Watching their progress, celebrating their achievements, and helping them overcome challenges has brought me immense satisfaction. It has also deepened my understanding of Tang Soo Do, as teaching requires a thorough comprehension of techniques and the ability to break them down into understandable steps. This process has enhanced my own skills and has given me a renewed appreciation for the art.

In addition to teaching, I have also taken on the role of assessing students' progress. This responsibility has allowed me to contribute to the growth and development of the Tang Soo Do community. Assessing students involves not only evaluating their technical abilities but also understanding their individual journeys and providing constructive feedback to help them improve. It has been a rewarding experience, allowing me to give back to the community that has supported me throughout my journey.

Despite Anthony and Emily suspending their training, my commitment to Tang Soo Do remains strong. Their decision has not diminished the importance of martial arts in our lives. Instead, it has reinforced my determination to continue my journey, setting an example of perseverance and dedication. I hope that one day they might return to Tang Soo Do, but for now, I carry on with the lessons and values we learned together.

As I look forward to the Sam Dan test, I am filled with a sense of gratitude

for the journey thus far and the anticipation of what lies ahead. The path to 3rd degree Black Belt is not just about achieving a new rank, but about continuing to grow as a martial artist and a person. Each step forward is a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and support that have been integral to my Tang Soo Do journey.

The preparation for Sam Dan has also involved deepening my understanding of the philosophical and historical aspects of Tang Soo Do. Studying the origins and evolution of the art has provided a richer context for my training and has deepened my appreciation for its principles and techniques. This holistic approach to martial arts, combining physical training with philosophical understanding, has been one of the most enriching aspects of my journey.

The journey to Sam Dan has reinforced the importance of lifelong learning. Each new rank and milestone bring new challenges and opportunities for growth. The commitment to continuous improvement and the pursuit of excellence are central to Tang Soo Do, guiding both my martial arts practice and my approach to life. This mindset of lifelong learning and growth is one of the most valuable lessons I have gained from Tang Soo Do.

10. Conclusion

My Tang Soo Do journey has been a transformative experience, enriching my life in countless ways. From the physical benefits to the mental and emotional growth, Tang Soo Do has been a source of strength and resilience. The shared experiences with my children and the support of the Tang Soo Do community have created lasting bonds and cherished memories. As I look forward to the Sam Dan test and beyond, I am filled with gratitude for the guidance and support of my instructors and the Tang Soo Do family. This journey has not only made me a better martial artist, but also a better

person, and I am excited for what lies ahead.

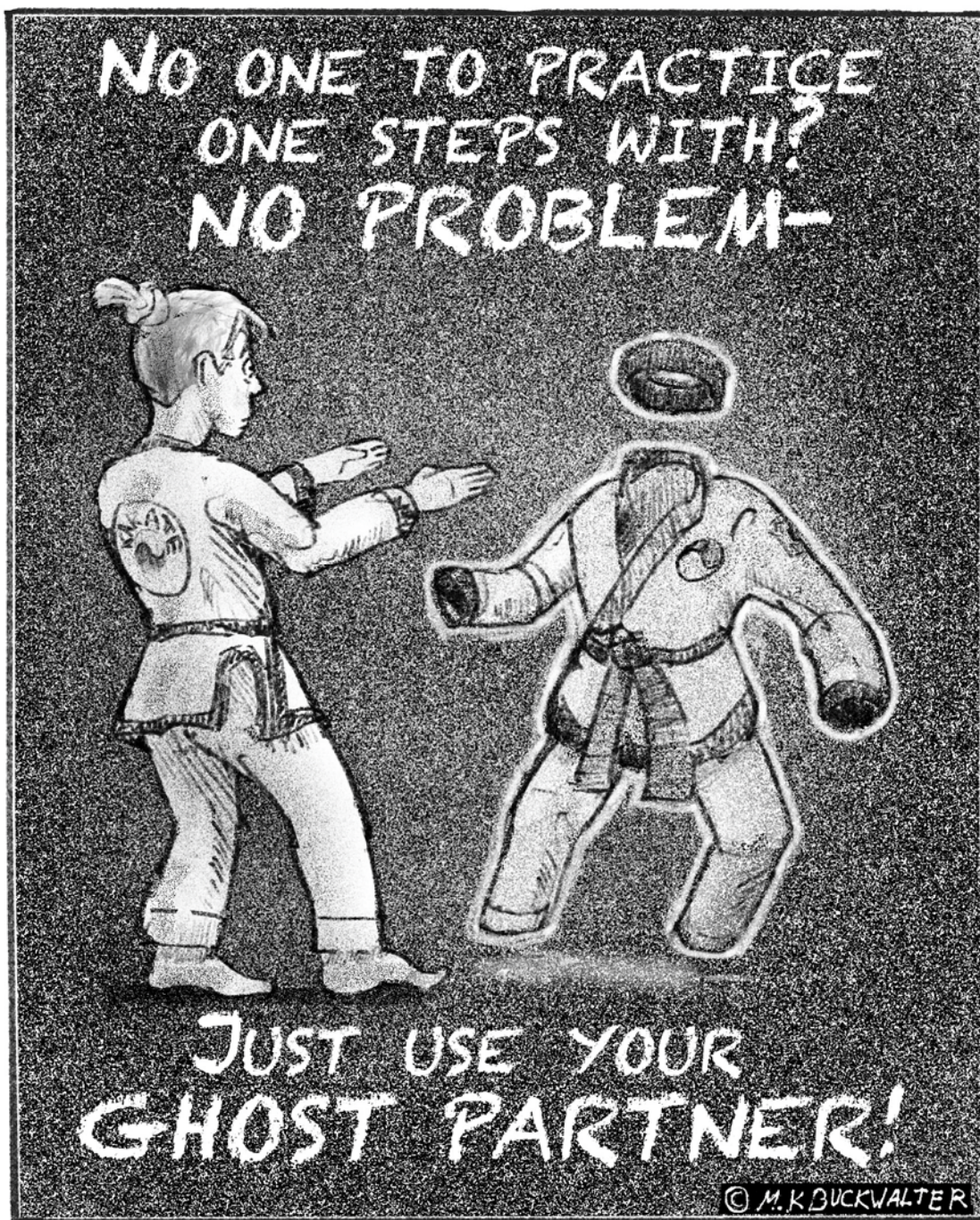
The journey in Tang Soo Do is ongoing, with each step offering new lessons and opportunities for growth. The physical training, mental discipline, and sense of community have enriched my life and the lives of my family. As I continue to practice and advance in Tang Soo Do, I carry with me the values and principles that have guided me thus far. The journey is not just about achieving ranks, but about the continuous pursuit of excellence and self-improvement.

In the coming years, I hope to continue my Tang Soo Do journey, both as a student and as a mentor to others. The experiences and lessons learned will undoubtedly shape my approach to life, instilling a sense of discipline, perseverance, and respect. I am grateful for the guidance of my instructors, the support of my family, and the camaraderie of my fellow students. Together, we will continue to pursue the path of Tang Soo Do, embracing the challenges and celebrating the achievements that come our way.

As I move forward, I am committed to upholding the values and traditions of Tang Soo Do, while also contributing to the growth and development of the community. Whether through teaching, mentoring, or continuing my own training, I am dedicated to the lifelong journey of martial arts. The lessons learned and the bonds formed will continue to inspire and motivate me, as I strive to be the best version of myself, both on and off the mat.

Tang Soo Do has been more than just a martial art; it has been a guiding force in my life, shaping my character, values, and approach to challenges. The journey from white belt to preparing for Sam Dan has been filled with invaluable lessons and unforgettable experiences. As I continue this journey, I am inspired by the principles and philosophy of Tang Soo Do, striving for excellence in martial arts and in life.

JUST FOR KICKS



Answers to Kids' Corner Word Search Translations

- Arm: **Pahl**
- The number one: **Hana**
- The number five: **Tasot**
- The martial art we are learning: **Tang Soo Do**
- Ready (a motion and command): **Choon Bee**
- Return (said at the start and end of class): **Baro**
- Start (said by the judge of sparring rings): **Shi Jak**
- Turn around: **Dwi Ro Tora**
- Belt: **Dee**
- Training hall: **Dojang**
- Training uniform: **Do Bohk**
- Forms: **Hyung**



Please join all Vaughn's Dojang Students & Instructors
in our annual Donations Collection for the

Bethesda Project

which provides food, shelter, & clothing for the homeless of Philadelphia

Bring any of the following to the Audubon Studio or give items to your instructor. All Items should be **new** and **please do not gift wrap**.

Items Needed
Men's Large and X-Large Underwear
Men's Flannel Large & X-Large Underwear
Bars of Soap
Stick Deodorant
\$5.00-25.00 Gift Cards from Wawa, Target, CVS, & Dunkin
Large and X-Large Gloves
Large and X-Large Sweatshirts & Jeans
Disposable Razors



ALL ITEMS MUST BE TURNED IN BY DEC. 12TH! Thank you!