

**December 14, 2013**

**Isabel Diaz, 1st Dan Black Belt**

**The Journey to Earning a Black Belt**



My journey to earning the black belt started when I was six years old, and in first grade. That was when my mom signed me up for Karate. My friend Trenton was already a yellow belt when I started. During the first class, I had trouble doing all of the techniques, so Kelly helped clarify everything and made me feel comfortable. During the second class, I stood next to Trenton and talked to him about exercises, standing positions, and everything else. At first I didn't really know any of the katas or techniques, and I sometimes messed around during class. In the first classes of being a beginner, it was mostly games and a little bit of work. But sometimes, I had to work for the games. I thought it was both fun and difficult.

Karate means a lot to me. One thing is that Karate is a time to challenge myself. For example, I test myself by understanding how to do new techniques, acquiring new katas, and by pushing my body's limits by doing harder conditioning practices. I also think it is a chance to study how to defend myself. For example, by sparring people in third hour, and by doing takedowns with weapons. The final thing that Karate means to me is that it is a chance to learn new things. For example, discovering how to control my attitude and respect others.

Earning my black belt took a long time to accomplish. But I was able to achieve it. One way I earned it was by practicing my katas and techniques constantly. Like during class and at home. As well as by trying my hardest and giving everything I had. For example, not being sloppy, and paying attention. But most of all, I earned my black belt by never giving up, and following the positive examples of Master Pham and all of my instructors. All of my instructors helped me through this journey, and I will always think of them when I put on my black belt.

**Isabel Diaz, 1st Dan Black Belt**