



**Spotswood & Matawan, NJ**

**732-254-1214**

**[www.fastkix.com](http://www.fastkix.com)**

# **BLACK BELT TESTING**

**OCTOBER 10, 2025**

# Congratulations!

Congratulations on achieving this milestone in your Taekwondo training! Every one of our testing candidates has shown so much dedication and heart this testing cycle to prepare and master the material. Your hard work is finally paying off!

Your true test has been the countless hours spent preparing for this day. Today is about celebrating your success.

Each one of you has inspired us every day in class. Thank you for making it a joy to teach you Taekwondo!

Grandmaster Kevin Balon  
Master Charles Ferrone  
Master Nick Carbley  
Master Sue Batko



# Thank you!



Thank you to every person who helps make this school so special!

OUR STUDENTS who give 100% every day to their training and inspire us every day with their dedication, OUR FAMILIES who support our students' dreams and embrace the time and effort needed to succeed. Your sacrifices are endless and always appreciated, and to OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS for making sure that every student is incredibly well prepared and helping us run our school and testing. Our Fastkix Family is truly blessed, and we thank you for your never-ending support and kindness!



# FASTKIX INSTRUCTORS STAFF

Grandmaster Kevin Balon	Mr. Nicholas Tsoukalas
Master Charles Ferrone	Mr. Daniel Gerasimov
Master Nicholas Carbley	Miss Nylah Perez
Master Sue Batko	Mr. Travis Jaworowski
Miss Isabella Carulli	

## VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS

Alex Annino	Lucas Leston
Anvi Ajay	Nicholas Jach
Brian Shamailov	Pragathi Sai
Dev Amin	Robert D'Amodio
Dylan Eskow	Sophie Martiak
Eli Shamailov	Veronica Sharkan
Emanuele Roveccio	Vivaan Gupta
Jayden Dasti	Xavier Johnston
Kaylani Sodusta	Yuti Chaudhary

## JUDGES PANEL

Grandmaster Kevin Balon, 8<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Master Charles Ferrone, 6<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Master Nicholas Carbley, 6<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Master Sue Batko, 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt

## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Eli Shamailov

Eli is a 9 year old student at William Miller Elementary School. He wants to be a surgeon or basketball player. Eli started taekwondo in 2021 to challenge himself to learn something new.



**What other activities do you do?** Basketball, baseball and football

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** It has helped my confidence in school and in taekwondo to be more open.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Learning self defense and I still feel a bit of a struggle being tested on it.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Mother's & Father's Day at Taekwondo.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** From Master Charles, Master Sue & Mr. Connor- To always be happy for your opponent even if you lose.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My parents & Master Sue always encourage me to never give up and to do my very best.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My goal is to become a 4th Degree Black Belt, this is important for me because I know this will make my parents & instructors proud and I will earn a sword.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Master Charles and Master Sue for always pushing me to achieve harder levels

**Eli dedicates his belt to everyone at Fastkix Taekwondo for never giving up on him.**



## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Prit Gheewala



Prit is 9 and in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Frost Elementary School. He wants to be a professional athlete. Prit started taekwondo in 2021 to get stronger and have better discipline

**What other activities do you do?** Soccer and cricket

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Trying to remember all the forms was a challenge that I overcame by practicing.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Learning how to break boards

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Just try your best and practice. Master Sue gave me that advice.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My sister helped me with forms and my mom kept me motivated to continue training to earn my black belt.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** To earn my black belt

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I would like to thank Master Sue for all of her help with forms.

**Prit dedicates his belt to Master Sue and Mister Nick Tsoukalas.**



## MAINTENANCE TEST CANDIDATES

From 1st Degree Senior black belt on, Fastkix students participate in “maintenance” testing during our regular twice-yearly tests to maintain and evaluate their skills. At black belt, there are set waiting periods in between ranks, so rather than have students go several years without experiencing a formal testing, they participate in maintenance testing. We require a certain number of successful maintenance tests to be eligible for the next rank test, and maintenance candidates are graded. They must achieve a minimum score for the maintenance test to count.

Giovanna DeSena	Emanuele Roveccio
Sophie Martiak	Seyyon Nagharajan
Jia Gheewala	Daniel Gerasimov
Aryan Chinta	Dev Amin
Mattia Roveccio	Travis Jaworowski





# **From Miss Isabella's Family**

We are incredibly proud of our daughter, Isabella. She is a wonderful teacher, a loving sister, and an exceptional daughter. Her ability to inspire those around her and her commitment to growth are just a few of the many reasons we admire her so deeply.

She has always pushed herself to be her very best, and her dedication, resilience, and passion continue to amaze us. Whether in the classroom, at home, or in her relationships, Isabella leads with kindness, intelligence, and strength. This achievement is further proof of her dedication and perseverance.

As parents, watching Isabella grow into the remarkable young woman she is today has been one of our greatest joys. Her future is undeniably bright, and we are so excited to see what's next for her. Whatever path she chooses, we know she'll walk it with purpose, grace, and heart.

Isabella, never forget how deeply loved you are and how proud we are to be your parents. The world is better with you in it—and your journey is just beginning.

With all our love and pride,  
Mom & Dad



Bella,

Congratulations on earning your 4th degree black belt! I am beyond proud of you. All the hard work has finally paid off. You deserve your flowers! I will be there cheering you on the entire time. Good luck! ❤️

## **BLACK BELT CANDIDATE**

### **Ziggy Krawczyk**



Ziggy is 10 and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student. He started taekwondo in 2019.

**What other activities do you do?** Soccer and basketball  
**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, it has helped me focus in school.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Re-learning all the forms was a challenge.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Belt testing  
**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** To keep trying and never give up

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My father helped me the most by pushing me to go to class and practice.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My goal is to earn my black belt.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** My friends

**Ziggy dedicates his belt to his grandfather.**



## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Avyan Mathur

Avyan is 10 and in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Hammerskjold Upper Elementary School. He wants to be a software developer. He started taekwondo in 2022 to learn self-defense.



**What other activities do you do?** Soccer and I play the trumpet in band

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** It helped me stand up for myself because if I get bullied, I can defend myself. Taekwondo has also made me more confident because of all the help that the instructors give when I don't know my forms.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** My biggest challenge in this rank is one of my kicks because when I do that kick (jump reverse sidekick), I never land correctly. I overcame that by practicing over and over at my house until I could land it with ease.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** The mushroom ball tournament is my greatest taekwondo experience because it serves as a reminder to never give up. I worked incredibly hard in the finals to win it.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** The best piece of advice I got was "practice and practice at home until you nail it." It was given by Master Sue.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** When my training got hard at senior brown belt, I thought of giving up until my brother motivated me by helping me with some moves from the lower rank material. When I came back to taekwondo, I learned all my moves and got my red stripe.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** I want to become a 4th-Degree Black Belt.



**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Grandmaster Balon, my Mommy, and my brother, Advay.

**Avyan dedicates his belt to his brother Advay because "he introduced me to taekwondo and helped me learn kicks perfectly."**

## 4TH DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Isabella Carulli

4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt Candidates are required to prepare an entire day of taekwondo classes on one topic. The topic has to fit all ages and ranks and they present it to all classes at both locations. Miss Isabella chose Leadership In School and at Home and everyone who took class that day was blown away by her presentation!

	29/30 SEPT	2025
		
	LEADERSHIP	
	IN SCHOOL	
	& AT HOME	
	Mentorship, Emotional	
	Control, Perseverance,	
	Confidence, & Focus	
	Matawan: Sept 29 (All Classes)	
	Spotswood: Sept 30 (All Classes)	
	Led by Miss Isabella	
		



## 4TH DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### ***What Taekwondo Means to Me***

Without taekwondo I wouldn't have found my voice. For those that know me and my now loud personality, it might seem hard to believe. But for a while I wasn't sure I had a voice. When I first started I was extremely shy - never the first one to volunteer for anything. I was nervous to be myself. Over the years this changed. I can honestly say that I would not be the person I am today without Taekwondo. Martial arts has helped build my confidence. I've learned how to be strong, both for myself and others. This sport has shown me the importance of leading with kindness and compassion, and to not be afraid of who you are.

Taekwondo might be an individual sport, but at Fastkix it's more than that. You get to be part of something greater than yourself. This sport has given me a family I never knew I needed. One that loves me for exactly who I am and has shown me that I matter. I will forever be grateful for my chosen family who continues to show up for me. No matter how hard life gets, I will always have my family and this sport to fall back on.

## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE



### **Brian Shamailov**

Brian is 10 and a student at Jonas Salk Middle School. He aspires to be an engineer. Brian started taekwondo in 2021 because he enjoyed learning the kicks and self defense at Master Charles' classes at the Goddard School.

**What other activities do you do?** Cross Country  
**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** It helped my confidence by being able to communicate better with others.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Reviewing red belt again took me some time but with extra practice I got it.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** On my very first day of class I loved the games we played.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** From Master Sue- to keep pushing through even on the hard days.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My parents, Master Sue, Master Charles and Miss Isabella motivate me to not give up.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** To become a 4th degree black belt.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** My parents, Master Sue, Master Charles, and Miss Isabella for encouraging me always.

**Brian dedicates his belt to his mom  
for always making the time to take  
him to class.**

## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Reeva Javia



Reeva is 11 and a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Princeton Day School. She aspires to be a doctor specializing in the brain. She started taekwondo in 2022 to boost her confidence level and to be more brave and daring.

**What other activities do you do?** Volleyball, public speaking, creative writing, and RSM

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, it has. Before in fifth grade, I couldn't imagine myself speaking in front of my whole school. Last year, in sixth grade, I spoke to my entire school for a Thanksgiving festival. I did not believe I could do that until that very day. Taekwondo helped me with my confidence significantly.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** My biggest challenge training for black belt was to memorize all of the self defense. Before, I would just learn my self defense, test, and instantly forget it. Now, I practice with Aanvi, my sister, and work on that a lot when I come to taekwondo.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** My favorite moment was getting my yellow belt because that was my first testing. That was the moment I knew that I wanted to continue taekwondo.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** The best piece of advice that I got was to stay strong and act like it too. That was for my first testing. Miss Isabella gave me that small yet powerful piece of advice when I started freaking out about forms.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** Yuti, my best friend, helped me through all of the times I thought I couldn't do it anymore. She pushed me to continue my journey.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My ultimate dream is to join the elite females who have earned 4th degree or higher. This is important to me because I want to show the world what I can do.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I would like to really thank Miss Isabella for pushing me beyond my limits and believing in me.

**Reeva dedicates her belt to her best friend Yuti for "staying with me throughout everything, helping me practice for every testing, and for making me succeed in everything I do."**

## 4TH DEGREE BLACK BELT

### CANDIDATE

### Isabella Carulli

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** When I was younger and broke 4 boards with an axe kick. I remember being crushed in a hug by Mr. Balon. It made my heart burst with joy. He knew I could do it and now so do I.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Your entire training is a test, testing day is when you show up to show everyone all the work you've done. Master Sue told me this when I was having anxiety about testing. It reminded me to take a deep breath and center myself.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My students have always been my biggest motivation. These kids are incredible. They have shown me what it truly means to never give up. I am constantly learning from them and hope that they know how much I value and love them with every class I teach.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My ultimate goal is for my students to see how much taekwondo can help them in life and to understand that this isn't just a sport that they are a part of, it's a family. I am fortunate to be part of this family and it means the world to me for kids to feel the same way.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I want to thank my family, the one I go home to everyday and my Fastkix family. You all mean the world to me and I wouldn't be here today without you. Each one of you has contributed to my growth as a person and I will never be able to thank you enough.

**"This belt is for my Fastkix girls. We can do anything we put our minds to. You girls inspire me everyday and remind me what it means to be fierce."**





## 4TH DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE Isabella Carulli



Isabella is a graduate of NYU and full-time member of our Fastkix staff. Among her myriad responsibilities, she is the Mini Masters Program Director for our Spotswood location, the head of our Instructor Program and runs all of our special Girls' events including our Girl to Girl mentor program. We are truly blessed to have such an incredible person on our team!

**When did you start taekwondo and why?** I started Taekwondo when I was 6 years old and later took a break for school. After I graduated college I came back as an instructor. I started taekwondo because of my Dad. For as long as I could remember he was a martial artist. I saw how dynamic the sport was and the family that you gained with it and I knew I wanted to be a part of it.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Taekwondo brought out my voice. For a long time I didn't know if I had one. With my instructors' guidance I learned when to use it and how - not just for my own benefit but for others. Taekwondo helped me gain the trust I needed in myself to succeed in whatever I do.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** A big challenge for me was finding the time to train. I overcame this by asking for help from Master Sue, Master Charles, and especially Grandmaster Balon. I did private lessons to keep up and practiced on my own at home.

## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE



## Mia Shamailov

Mia is a 13 year old student at Jonas Salk Middle School who wants to be a doctor. She started taekwondo in 2021 to learn discipline, protect herself, build up character, and join a great team.

**What other activities do you do?** Team gymnastics  
**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** It has. When I started, I was very shy and not willing to interact as much, but now I'm running for president for my school and very confident.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Forms was my biggest challenge and I did a lot of practice to make sure I don't miss a step.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** When Miss Isabella and I were playing a game and we were tied to each other and fell & Master Charles and I having our own handshake.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** To never give up - from Master Charles.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** M parents and Master Charles helped guide me on not giving up when I felt the pressure was too much while trying to balance school, taekwondo and gymnastics.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** As of right now reaching black belt is a big goal for me.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Everyone at Fastkix and my parents

**Mia dedicates her belt to her parents  
for always believing in her.**

# BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

## Paige Hogan

Paige is 13 and a 8th grade student at Memorial Middle School. She aspires to be an actress. Paige started taekwondo 4 years ago to be stronger and more confident and because she thought it was cool.



**What other activities do you do?** Band, chorus, drama, theatre, acting school, vocal lessons, piano and drum lessons. I am also in the National Honor Society.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, it has helped me stick up for myself more and it makes me feel stronger mentally and physically.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Learning all of the forms from white to red! I have been working hard to know all of the forms by practicing regularly.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** My favorite memory was when I was a yellow belt and Master Aaron was teaching us our rank's kicks. One of the students was kicking in a funny way and Master Aaron renamed the kick after that student!

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Enjoy the pressure because it only gets worse from here - Grandmaster Balon

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** I once thought about stopping recently because of all the other activities that I do. When I told my parents they encouraged me to continue by reminding me of all of the hard work I have put into training. To quit now, would be a mistake that they do not want me to regret. I am so grateful for their support and for instilling in me such a hard work ethic.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My ultimate goal is to continue increasing my black belt rank as far as I can go. I want to make my elbow strong enough to break through multiple boards.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I would like to thank my parents, all of the instructors, my whole family and especially my cousin Robbie!

**Paige dedicates her belt to Robbie "because we started this together and we lean on each other for support to continue on."**

## Daniel's Community Service Project

My name is Daniel Edward, a third degree black belt candidate who has been with the school for 10 years. My sister, Saira, a second-degree black belt and eight years older had joined in 2008, the year I was born and hence I have been a frequent visitor at Fastkix since my infancy. I have looked on Mr. Balon, Mr. Charles, Mr. Nick, Mr. Gabe, Miss Isabella, Ms. Sue, Mr. Neil, Mr. Lenny and the rest of the team as my second family. We have travelled together, some of us have grown up together and more importantly we have been kicking each other in the head for years. We bonded in that unique way. I am grateful for having such exemplary mentors and having made such lasting friendships.

Recently one of my track teammates was talking about the importance of adequate protein in our diet and I came to learn of protein energy malnutrition, a condition known as Kwashiorkor and that led to the discussion of nutritional deficiencies and starvation at large especially in children. While some of us obsess about the amount of protein we need to build muscle as athletes, there are underprivileged amongst us who are unsure if they are going to get two square meals a day. This is what motivated me to do a Food Drive as my Community service program.

The holidays are coming up and it would be comforting to know that we're contributing in some small way in alleviating the hunger of one child or one family in our midst while we are partaking of sumptuous feasts. Imagine carving up that Turkey consumed with guilt! Wouldn't you rather have only pleasant things on your mind like having contributed to our Food drive to ease the suffering of our fellow brothers and sisters? Donate a few cans of soup or Tuna (or anything non- perishable) and you are going to feel so good about yourself that you might even enjoy an overcooked green bean casserole! Hope you all have guilt free holidays this year because of the Fastkix Food Drive!

THANK YOU TO EVERONE  
FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!





## 3RD DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE Daniel Edward

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Attending the Nationals in Florida with the competition team is one of the best memories. I have never more thoroughly enjoyed myself. We would practice together, go out to eat, crack jokes, win medals and had a great time. I was only six when I first attended the Nationals and I still remember Master Charles hoisting me up in his arms and spinning around when I won the Gold. I felt very proud.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Mr. Charles once told me when I had lost and was feeling glum, "sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, that's how life goes. When you lose, don't get dispirited, try harder the next time". This motto has helped in my studies and exams too, not just taekwondo.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** Juggling schoolwork, taekwondo and my other extracurricular activities became quite grueling and at one point, I confess I did think of quitting. But my mother wouldn't let me until I got to the coveted Third-Degree. All the relentless "stop texting", "get off the phone", "get ready for Taekwondo", "are you done with your homework?", though irksome and sometimes quite unnerving at the time, it helped me plod on and move inexorably towards my goal.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** I would very much like to become a Master: a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Master Sue, Master Charles, Grandmaster Balon, Master Nick, Master Gabe, Miss Genna, Saira and my Mom.

**Daniel dedicates his belt to "My mom for being there for me constantly, during my triumphant moments and my crestfallen moments, motivating me, encouraging me and propelling me towards my goals in life including my Third-Degree Black Belt in Taekwondo."**

## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE Aanvi Javia



Aanvi is 14 and a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student at Princeton Day School. She wants to be a neurologist. Aanvi started taekwondo in 2022 to raise her confidence and learn a new skill.

**What other activities do you do?** Volleyball and piano  
**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, I am more social with students I don't usually talk to and frequently leave my comfort zone to try something new.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** I moved over the summer and it was harder to attend classes. Since I'm 14 and a senior red belt, I have to break two boards and two stations. Because of the limited amount of practice, I was worried about board breaking but I worked with the instructors and finally figured out my board breaks and eventually broke the boards.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** I loved the special events for girls that Miss Isabella and Master Sue planned! Girl's movie night, girls night, and the escape room were so fun!

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Miss Isabella would always tell me to be confident, whether it was before breaking a board, learning a new form, or even before a belt test.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My parents motivated me to continue this journey once we moved to Hillsborough this summer. Because of volleyball, high-school, and an increase in homework, I was less motivated to attend taekwondo classes. My parents guided and pushed me by taking me to classes whenever we got the chance and time and kept on encouraging me.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** I would like to become a 4th Degree Black Belt. I believe that females should also be seen mastering in this sport and earning this rank only comes after many years of hard work and dedication.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I want to thank my family for encouraging me to attend taekwondo classes every day and my wonderful instructors for teaching me something new every day.

**Aanvi dedicates this belt to "my taekwondo best friend Yuti. She has pushed me beyond what I thought I could do, helped me through the difficult times during training, and celebrated my wins and successes. I'm truly grateful for her being in my taekwondo experience and journey!"**

## BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Nylah Perez

A 16 year old, Nylah is a Junior at East Brunswick High School. She isn't sure what she'd like to do but loves art, photography, writing, music and teaching. She started taekwondo in 2022 for help with bullying and low self-confidence.



**What other activities do you do?** I draw a lot, listen to music, and am into photography/videography.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** It has helped tremendously with my confidence, both in taekwondo and in my personal life. In taekwondo I feel more prone to trying new things, and I carry myself a lot better than I did when I first started. I gained a lot more confidence in my personal life and in school since I am able to stand up for myself more. I'm able to appropriately assess situations whether I'm stressed, upset or unsure about something and I feel as if I can do better with handling certain situations. I know what I need to help myself, what is important and what is best for me rather than always worrying about things that don't matter, or don't affect me directly.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Having dedication & patience, especially when things get hard in my personal life. It takes a lot to be able to balance school, working, and to have the patience and mindset to want to continue pushing forward with training. Knowing how far I've come and how well I've been doing, and how proud everyone is for me makes me feel way better about myself.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** One of my favorites is one of my tournaments, I usually don't favor spin kicks, but being down by a few points, it was one of my few choices, and it made me win my round, showing me that sometimes I have to do things I'm unsure with or go out my comfort zone to achieve my goals. Trial and error!

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Always just push yourself, you can only get better from pushing to be the best version of yourself.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My family, instructors, teaching, all the kids and parents have helped me because though I have done way better over the years, sometimes I doubt myself. Knowing how people are for me shows me that I'm way more capable and a way better person than I think I am. It always makes me feel great to hear how others feel about me. It makes me feel better about myself.

## 3RD DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Daniel Edward



Daniel is 17 and a Senior at East Brunswick High School. He wants to be an investment banker. Daniel started taekwondo in 2014 because he was interested in Martial Arts from watching Jackie Chan movies and also because his sister, Saira was enrolled at Fastkix. "Since Saira joined in 2008, my birth year, I have been watching her and her friends practicing taekwondo since my infancy and I could hardly wait to join them."

**What other activities do you do?** Track, National Honor Society, Model UN

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, in Elementary school I sometimes got bullied. Sparring with my friends gave me the confidence to resist physical bullying. The appreciation and encouragement of my instructors and teammates at taekwondo also boosted my overall self-esteem. Showcasing my abilities in front of a packed audience at belt testings helped dispel any remnants of diffidence and helped me a great deal in debates and public speaking.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Junior year was a tough year. Keeping up with my AP classes, studying for the SAT and daily track practice while training for my third-degree black belt was quite challenging. I overcame it with good time management and diligent application.



# Rishil's Community Service Project

When students test for their 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt, they are required to create and run a community service project. Each testing, we are blown away by the creativity and effort that our members put into these projects!

Rishil's project was a book drive to benefit the East Brunswick Library. Here is his essay on his project:

Hi, my name is Rishil. As I am testing for my 3rd degree black belt, my community service project will be a book drive. This book drive will support the East Brunswick Public Library and all who visit it. I picked this project because ever since I was little, I have always loved reading books, since they would let my imagination run wild and take me into a different world each time I opened a new book. With this project, I hope to share the love of books with others.

There are donation bins at each school so please be generous!

Rishil has already emptied the bins multiple times.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED!



# BLACK BELT CANDIDATE Nylah Perez

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** 2 goals I have are to keep making the kids and parents happy and continue teaching and competing as long as I can. When I go to college, I don't know how much time I will have to continue but I hope to do so. Even if I pause for a bit, I want to continue to pass on my energy and happiness to everyone else. I hope to get to as many competitions as I can before having to slow down.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Everybody! My mom, my dad, my grandmother, cousins, aunt, grandfather, Master Charles, Grandmaster Balon, Master Sue, Mr Connor, Miss Isabella, Mr. Gabe, Nick, Daniel, JT, Sofia, Jason, Ian, and everybody else who I have known and been with over the few years!

Nylah dedicates her belt to "Master Charles for his extraordinary energy and enthusiasm and for competition class, Master Sue for her hugs, energy and honesty, Miss Isabella for her jokes and for being an amazing friend when I need, Master Nick for enthusiasm, and Mr. Nick because of how calm he is. Everyone has helped or inspired me for one reason or another, especially Miss Isabella, always letting me and everyone else know to never feel bad about myself, and Miss Sofia for her extreme talent. I look up to her a lot during competition classes. One person I most importantly miss and care about everyday is Mr. Connor. He always had so much energy, enthusiasm, jokes, and he was always super funny, intentionally and accidentally and he always made us laugh or smile no matter what. When I had chances to practice during sparring, I was always nervous but excited for the challenges he brought to me. He was extremely encouraging and he always made me and all the other kids and parents feel better despite all our nerves. Though he is not here physically, he's still around no matter what. I wish he would be here today to see my progress, along with the other kids in taekwondo. He would be extremely proud and happy for everybody. The last tournament he was at with me I won a gold medal that I gave to him in honor, and now I would like to dedicate my first black belt testing to him. Though gone, he is never forgotten and always missed. Thank you to everybody who is a part of the team and family, the kids I get to teach everyday, the parents, all the families, my peers, the people I work with, and to those who have moved on due to other activities, school/college/jobs and other parts of life. I love this place and all the people who are here! I would not be who I am today without Fastkix!"

## 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Niko Mousouroulis



Niko is 14 and a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Churchill Junior High School. He isn't sure what career he wants to pursue. Niko started taekwondo when he was 5 to learn how to fight and become more disciplined.

**What other activities do you do?** I am starting flag football and after school, I love to hang with friends.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, I have confidence to stand up for myself in any situation where I am being pushed around

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Memorizing forms - I overcame it with lots of practice.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Training with my friends

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** If it doesn't hurt, then you're not working hard enough!

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My friends because they motivated me to keep going and not stop.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** Becoming an Instructor because it would be a fun experience.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** My family for paying for everything and giving their time to drive me and giving me the motivation I need.

**Niko dedicates his belt to his Aunt Trinity because "she is a good person at heart and helped me study for my last black belt test and my past tests. She was there for a bunch of testing and a lot of the Tournaments. I get all my advice from her and without her, I wouldn't be the person I am today."**

## 3RD DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Rishil Anne



Rishil is a 13 year old 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Churchill Junior High School. He aspires to be a doctor. Rishil started taekwondo in 2017 to learn discipline and gain confidence.

**What other activities do you do?** Tennis, cricket & orchestra

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, it has made me more outgoing and able to talk in front of a crowd.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Being consistent with my stances, and I overcame it by practicing daily.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Breaking 3 boards with a side kick when I was 8.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Practice makes improvement, not perfection - Grandmaster Balon

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My parents motivated me to continue by supporting me throughout my training. I was also motivated to pass my brother in rank.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** Becoming a 4th Degree Black Belt. This is important to me because it's a rare achievement and it gives me an opportunity to challenge myself.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I would like to thank my parents and grandparents for inspiring me in every step of the way.

**Rishil dedicates his belt to his grandfather for encouraging him and driving him tirelessly to classes.**



## 2ND DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE



### Alex Annino

Alex is a 17 year old Senior at Agape Innovative Learning Center. He'd love to be a full time staff member at Fastkix one day. Alex started taekwondo in 2021 to be more confident and active.

**What other activities do you do?** I volunteer at my church.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?**

Taekwondo helped my confidence through having better conversations with people. It also has helped me with public speaking.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Breaking is definitely a challenge for me, but I solved it by taking extra lessons with Master Charles.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** I like working with all of the instructors. It's always very fun and there's always something interesting that happens.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** I've always struggled with confidence, so whenever Master Sue says I should be more confident it helps.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** I've thought about not being an instructor, but my parents encouraged me to try it again and I haven't wanted to leave since.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** I would like to get at least 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Id like to thank my parents, all the instructors and staff for helping me get to this point. If they weren't so encouraging and kind I wouldn't be where I am today.

**Alex dedicates his belt to "Master Isabella because I want to get 4th Degree Black Belt like her one day."**

## 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Prem Gheewala

Prem is 9 and a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Frost Elementary School. He wants to be a teacher. Prem started taekwondo in 2021 to get stronger and gain confidence.



**What other activities do you do?** Soccer and cricket

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?**

Taekwondo has helped me improve my confidence especially when performing on stage.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** To be able to find time to practice with all other activities and I overcame it by making a schedule.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Learning my black belt form.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Keep practicing

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** Getting my name on the belt motivated me to continue training.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** To earn a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Master Sue and Master Charles

**Prem dedicates his belt to Master Sue.**



# 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

## Shrey Patel

Shrey is 9 and a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Woodland Elementary School. He wants to be a dentist. He started taekwondo in 2021 to gain confidence, become disciplined, focus and for fitness and health.



**What other activities do you do?** Soccer and music

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes!

Taekwondo has helped me work with other people, talk to them about common interests, build social skills, focus on one thing at a time and finish time consuming tasks successfully on my own.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** The biggest challenge I had was self-defense. I was able to overcome it by practicing and working hard.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Learning how to break boards.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?**

Master Sue advised that I should practice at home so that I could learn the forms, remember all of the form moves and also be really good at the stances.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** When I wanted to stop at one point, Master Sue advised me to stay as I was almost half way there and by continuing and working hard, I would be able to get to black belt. I'm glad I continued.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** Become a 1st degree Black Belt and get my name on my belt. I am really proud of what I have achieved.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** All of my taekwondo Instructors and my family, especially my dad.

**Shrey dedicates his belt to his dad "who believes in me and always encouraged me to continue and practice."**

# 2ND DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

## Nicholas Jach

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?**

The best piece of advice I received during taekwondo training was to "train daily." Training every day taught me that real progress doesn't happen overnight; it happens through small efforts. Whether I was perfecting a form or preparing for my black belt test, daily practice helped me stay focused and motivated. That mindset has also helped me in school — I've learned that success comes from showing up every day and giving your best, even when it's hard.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** Yes, I have thought about stopping, especially instructing or training for competitions, but I know I'm good at what I do, and I push myself harder because getting a higher belt gives me a great sense of accomplishment.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My ultimate taekwondo goal is to win one of the competitions.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I would like to thank Master Sue because she always reminds to practice at home.



**Nicholas dedicates his belt to "my Dad because he helps me practice at home and always encourages me to try harder."**



## 2ND DEGREE BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Nicholas Jach

Nicholas is 9 and a student at St. Thomas the Apostle school. He wants to be a surgeon. Nicholas started taekwondo in 2019 to try something new and he wanted to challenge himself.



**What other activities do you do?** I am an instructor and on the competition team.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Over time, taekwondo has taught me focus, patience, and respect — values that I apply in school, at home, and in everyday life. It has helped me develop resilience, especially when working toward new belts or mastering difficult techniques. I've also learned how to stay calm under pressure, and I take pride in the progress I've made through hard work and consistency. Taekwondo isn't just a sport to me — it's a way to grow stronger inside and out.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Learning the forms was the biggest challenge but practicing daily helped me overcome it.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** My favorite taekwondo memory is when I became a black belt. The test for black belt was one of the toughest things I've ever done: a combination of forms, sparring, and breaking boards, all while staying focused under pressure. I remember feeling nervous but also confident, knowing I had trained hard for that moment. When I tied on my black belt for the first time, it wasn't just a symbol of skill — it was a reminder of how far I'd come. That moment taught me that perseverance pays off, and it gave me the confidence to tackle goals in other areas of life, including school and leadership.

## 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

### Zachary Madnick



Zachary is 9 and a 4<sup>th</sup> grade student at Hatikva Academy Charter School. He wants to be a landscaper or stormwater manager. Zachary started taekwondo in 2021 to start an activity that wasn't boring and can teach skills that will help in life if he's ever in danger.

**What other activities do you do?** I like to help my dad work outside and build new things.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes. I'm no longer scared of the dark since I'm mentally prepared to face my fears and attack if necessary.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** I had to come up with both a power kick and a technical kick for breaking boards. Master Sue taught me a variety of new kicks including a hook kick, which I can do with a lots more force than any other kick I know.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** When I attended career night at FastKix. I got to meet my friends' parents and learn about their interesting careers and get prizes.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Master Charles always screams out "Good Job!" and "Yes, you can do it!" This encouragement got me through learning the toughest moves, such as a pump 360 side kick.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My Dad would not let me quit. He would make me practice hard before every test to be sure I know my forms. I love making my dad happy.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** Use my taekwondo skills to fight off zombies during the next pandemic.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Master Sue, Master Charles, Master Nick, Miss Isabella and also my Dad. All of them encouraged me to get to where I am today.

**Zachary dedicates his belt to Isaac Newton because without gravity nothing would ever happen and President John F. Kennedy because he started the space program and today we can detect asteroids.**

# 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE Louis Custuna

Louis is 10 and in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Monroe Woodland Elementary School. He wants to be an engineer. Louis started taekwondo in 2019 because both of his brothers are black belts in taekwondo.



**What other activities do you do?** Playing the trumpet

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, taekwondo helped me to better respect others.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Forms - I kept practicing and stayed focused.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Breaking boards

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** Focus and keep practicing

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My dad helped me stay motivated and continue taekwondo.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** Become a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt and perfect my forms.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** My parents and to all the staff and instructors who helped me during my training.

**Louis dedicates his belt to his parents.  
"Thank you Mom & Dad!"**

# 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE



## Yuti Chaudhary

Yuti is 12 and a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Churchill Junior High School. She wants to be a neurosurgeon. Yuti started taekwondo in 2021 to improve her self-confidence.

**What other activities do you do?** Basketball, dance and tennis  
**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, taekwondo has helped me with my self-confidence. Now, I'm not as scared of small things like I used to be.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** My biggest challenge was board breaking. I overcame it by trying to find different breaks that I'm comfortable with, and practicing those breaks so that I feel more confident in breaking with them.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** I don't have a specific favorite moment/memory, but there have been so many times when class becomes super energetic and fun, and those are always my favorite moments in taekwondo.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** The best piece of advice that I've received was during board breaking. The instructor that I was breaking with told me to not overthink it, just break it.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** When things like board breaking got hard for me, Master Sue spent a lot of time with me to help me overcome those challenges.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** I don't have a specific goal, but I want to grow as high in ranks as I'm able to. This is important to me because I want to continue to learn new/different things, and in different ranks you learn different things.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** I would like to thank the instructors for getting me to this level. The way all the instructors teach, and really make sure that we understand the material, really helps a lot and I'm super appreciative for all of it.

**Yuti dedicates her belt to to her parents. "This is because whenever I come back from class thinking that I didn't do well, my parents would always encourage me to do better next time."**



# 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

## Pragathi Sai



Pragathi is 12 and in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Churchill Junior High School. She wants to be a pediatrician or a lawyer. Pragathi started taekwondo in 2020 to get stronger and develop confidence.

**What other activities do you do?** I play the violin and take piano classes. I also play tennis and volleyball and in the spring, I'm taking up track.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Yes, because before I was very introverted and not very talkative at all, but then taekwondo helped me step out of my comfort zone and over the years, I became very extroverted and genuinely open to people.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** I moved to Texas and moved back in the same summer. It was hard to catch up because I missed one whole month of classes, but it was all worth it at the end because now I'm getting my 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Senior and get to catch up with all my friends. I overcome my challenge by practicing every day and getting help from friends.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** My favorite memory was when I was eight years old and I was doing Ninja Saturday, I fell flat on the floor as I was running up the blue mats because I tripped over the edges. Master Aaron helped me and we all started laughing.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** "Don't rush" - famous quote by Master Charles, Master Sue, Mr. Nick Master Nick, Master Gabe, Miss Isabella and basically the whole instructor team

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** I never really wanted to drop taekwondo because of taekwondo. I wanted to drop taekwondo because it was a lot at one point a time when I was 10 years old. I had lots of classes at that time and I wanted to stop taekwondo and another class to make it easier, but I persisted and thought about all the goals I could achieve in the future.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** I would like to go to Florida for AAU Nationals and I would like to achieve my 5<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt because I made a promise to Master Sue that I wouldn't stop taekwondo until after I'm a higher rank than she is to break the record of a girl's highest rank at Fastkix.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Thank you to all my instructors for helping me on my journey to this rank. I would also like to thank all my family members for making me more persistent with my dream of taekwondo.

**Pragathi dedicates her belt to Grandmaster Balon because "he was there to talk to me when I was a quiet kid. I was pretty shy when I was younger and he got me to be the extrovert I am today."**

# 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

## Ayden Lopez



Ayden is 10 and a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at St. Thomas the Apostle School. He wants to be a professional soccer player.

Ayden started taekwondo in 2019 to improve self-confidence, socialize and learn self defense.

**What other activities do you do?** Soccer, baseball & track

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** It's helped me to not be afraid of other kids.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Forms - I overcome it by training and watching videos.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** When I won the gold medal in sparring at the Fastkix championship.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** All of the advice Master Charles gives me during competition training.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My father told me that those times come and go and that if I want to be the best at anything I must fight through those times.

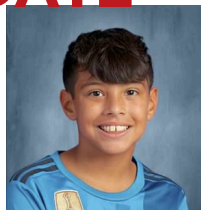
**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** Become a 4th degree black belt and win multiple gold medals.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** Master Charles for all the guidance in comp class and Master Sue for helping with forms.

**Ayden dedicates his belt to his father for taking him to class every time.**

# 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE Jayden Dasti

Jayden is 12 and a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Carl Sandburg Middle School, Old Bridge. He wants to do something sports related as his future career. Jayden started taekwondo in 2021 to improve his mental health by boosting confidence, self-esteem, and develop the discipline needed to achieve all of his goals.



**What other activities do you do?** I participate in 2 soccer teams - one for Old Bridge Township Recreation and after a 3 day tryout, I am proud that I made the soccer team for Carl Sandburg Middle School.

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?** Taekwondo has helped me with my confidence because it has taught me perseverance and focus. I have learned that no matter how difficult something may be I can succeed as long as I try my best.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** The biggest challenge for me is structuring my time between soccer practices and games while still attending taekwondo and competition classes. Also, being on the high honor roll at school is a challenge to not allow my school grades drop due to all of the extra activities.

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** My favorite recent memory was attending the 2025 AAU Nationals in Utah. However, my favorite memories are of Mr. Connor and how he always encouraged me in class and tournaments. In addition, being the 1<sup>st</sup> and only student in the Matawan location when it opened and having lots of extra classes with Grandmaster Balon when I started training was very special to me.

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?** The best advice I have been giving is that I can do anything no matter how difficult it may seem. All of my instructors have not only been encouraging, but have instilled a positive attitude that I can it if I try.

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** Prior to earning my black belt I became interested in soccer, and was asked to join a travel team. I knew that would take a lot of time and commitment so I needed to make a difficult choice and that doing both travel soccer and taekwondo would not be possible. Master Charles' belief in me, and being there for me in and out of the studio made the choice easy. He has helped a great deal in building my confidence.

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My ultimate goal is to keep training, and someday to have the title of Master Jayden.

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** My grandma or "Mam" as I call her. She has been one of my biggest supporters getting me to and from practices. The confidence she gives me to succeed and her pride and belief in me has given me all the support needed to accomplish my goals.

**Jayden dedicates his belt to "my mom with gratitude, love and respect for all the influence she has had on my young life. My success, strength and character are all due to her unending support and sacrifice that she gives freely and always."**

# 1ST DEGREE SENIOR BLACK BELT CANDIDATE

## Veronica Sharkan

Veronica is 12 and a 7th-grade student. She started Taekwondo in 2021 to gain self-confidence and to improve strength, flexibility and coordination.



**What other activities do you do?** Playing violin and I am in choir at school

**Has taekwondo helped improve your confidence?**

Learning self-defense techniques fosters personal safety and reduces feelings of vulnerability.

**What was your biggest taekwondo challenge, and how did you overcome it?** Sparring

**What is your favorite Taekwondo memory?** Helping train the Mini Masters

**What's the best advice you've been given in Taekwondo?**

Keep up! Don't give up what you achieved before!

**Who or what helped you to stay motivated when training got hard?** My parents and sister

**What is your ultimate taekwondo goal?** My goal is 3rd Degree Black Belt

**Who would you like to thank for helping get you to this level?** My family is the biggest support!

**Veronica dedicates her new belt to her sister.**