

Tae Kwon Do Tyke

By Rebecca I. Allen



In&Out Staff Photos

Most

most moms don't let their 8-year-old sons play with knives. Darlene Lang makes an exception for Brandyn who holds the current world championship title in weapons for his age group as a second-degree black belt in tae kwon do.

Sporting blonde streaks on the top of his hedgehog-like do, Brandyn tosses the *kamas*, two 14-inch wooden handles topped with curved 7-inch blades, around with ease. The weapons are just one of several the third-grader has in the practice room of the family's Anthem home in Parkside.

Brandyn began studying tae kwon do four years ago. Including four trips to Lee's Black Belt Academy in Tempe and West Phoenix, and his daily practices, he spends on average 18–20 hours a week on tae-kwon do. The evidence of his dedication lines the walls of his bedroom, which is adorned with more than 70 trophies, countless ribbons, colored belts and competition photos.

"Look, this proves I'm a world champ," Brandyn says as he digs out the championship pins won at the June 25 American Tae Kwon Do Association (ATA) World Championships held in Little Rock, Ark. Brandyn won world

champ in both weapons and form, and placed in the top 10 for sparring.

"When I'm 18 I'll get a blue suit to put all my pins on," he explains.

Brandyn's tae kwon do plans take him into his thirties. He intends to make third-degree black belt this year and ATA rules require him to stay at that level until he's 18.

"I'll stay at third-degree for nine years," Brandyn says. "I'll be a master at 32."

The family is dedicated to the Korean style of karate; they traveled to seven states for 30 competitions last year and both Randy and Darlene study alongside their only child. The youth's dedication shows when he practices. As Brandyn begins his 82-move form, called *Jung Yul*, which he competes with, his smiling cherubic face is replaced with pursed lips and a furrowed brow over an intent blue-eyed gaze. He says the form is the toughest part of tae kwon do.

"You have to make every. Move. Perfect," he says, pausing between words for effect. "Seriously," he adds, using his favorite adverb.

But his life is not all tae kwon do. Brandyn plays many sports including football and swimming. He saw the movie "Cars" recently and proclaimed it, "The best movie in the world," and he declared "SpongeBob

Tae Kwon Do Arizona Regional Tournament

August 4–5
Phoenix Civic Plaza
111 N. 3rd St., Phoenix
Admission: \$5 Friday,
\$5 Saturday, \$8 both days,
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Info: 623-561-5425

Tae Kwon Do Instruction

ATA Blackbelt Academy at Anthem

42211 N. 41st Dr.
623-465-2697

AK Tae Kwon Do

42407 N. Vision Way
Centre Point at Anthem
623-551-8089

SquarePants" the leader of all TV shows. "Seriously."

The Langs have Brandyn watch other competitions such as the television show "American Idol."

"He needs to see both sides, to let him know not everyone wins," Darlene says.

What does he like best about tae kwon do?

"Friends and trophies," Brandyn says. "Seriously." **io**

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