

MILAN: 11-year-old Jacob Dunlap earns Black Belt of the Year Award from Milan Tae Kwon Do

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Jacob Dunlap of Milan Tae Kwon Do earned the prestigious award of Black Belt of the Year from Master R. Christian Dykes.

Eleven-year-old Jacob Dunlap was recently presented with a Black Belt of the Year Award by Master R. Christian Dykes of Milan Tae Kwon Do. The boy was selected for the award, in part, as a result of his motivation to take on leadership and teaching roles, as well as for his dedication to the art.

"This is the highest and most coveted award given to students at Milan Tae Kwon Do," Dykes said.

Jacob started training at 4 years old in the Little Kicker program and advanced to a junior black belt. Since then, he has participated in countless competitions and demonstrations.

Jacob tested in 2012 for his second degree black belt. Dykes said it was obvious to everyone prior to the test that he was ready for the next chapter in his Tae Kwon Do career.

A student with a black belt under the age of 15 does not usually take on leadership roles. Jacob is so dedicated that he asks Dykes for more responsibilities each week. As the highest ranking student in the junior advance class, he helps with the beginner class and conducts inspections, leads in warm-up exercises and stretches for his advance class.

I felt good about winning the award because of all my hard work this year," Jacob said.

Jacob is homeschooled and his mother, Jennifer Dunlap, said it likely gives him more time and opportunity to pursue his passions. Besides being at the martial arts studio each week, Jacob has attended Homeschool Central in Ann Arbor one day per week. He took a Toastmasters class, LEGO physics, LEGO robotics, and a computer and music class.

This past summer, Jacob started his own lawn cutting business, which allowed him to deposit \$1,000 in his bank account.

Dunlap said was pleased that her son received recognition for his budding leadership skills and love of Tae Kwon Do.

"He enjoys helping others," she said.

When Jacob isn't busy cutting lawns, he's on the baseball field or enjoying his hobby of model trains.

Jacob has five siblings. His eight-year-old sister, Sarah, also trains at the Milan studio.

Dykes said he couldn't ask for a better mentor serving the junior students at Milan Tae Kwon Do.

"I am so glad to have Jacob as a student, friend and fellow black belt," Dykes said.

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