



# FUTURE LEADERS FOUNDATION

HARMONY • PEACE • BROTHERHOOD





Future Leaders Foundation  
401 North Main Street, Pleasantville, NJ 08232  
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# Future Leaders Foundation

approved 501 (c) (3) tax exempt foundation

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Future Leaders Foundation is to develop leadership qualities in our children at an early age. Using martial arts as a vehicle, this program will develop strong will, strength in character, and the tools that are necessary to combat negative influences and drug related peer pressures.

## STATEMENT OF NEED

The Future Leaders Foundation recognizes that the social problems in our communities, such as drug and alcohol abuse, youth violence, and racial conflict are staggering. The problems in our youth community are pervasive and are not limited to children growing up in undesirable circumstances. The basic "normal" needs of growing children, facing a confusing and often demanding adult world, even in strong family homes, beg for reassurance of self worth. Moreover, studies show a current trend toward the disintegration of the family, resulting in little or no family structure or values.

Many of our children are conditioned for failure, and failure becomes an accepted way of living with little or no value for life itself. Often the "at-risk" child will be lost in the early stages of his or her formal education, unless strong and clearly designed support programs are implemented. Also, positive role models for a child's development of strength of character and self-esteem are a necessity.

The problems in our community cross all socio-economic lines and require thoroughly tested and proven remedies which are on-going and offered to the general population of children.

## SOLUTION

The Future Leaders Foundation believes that every child should have the opportunity to train traditional Martial Arts. Our direction is one of prevention rather than cure. The Future Leaders Foundation has chosen the Elementary School environment as the most pertinent to a child's development. That is, we have chosen a familiar environment where the children can easily learn and transfer the benefits of the martial arts program directly into other life activities.

Popularity and respect for Martial Arts among youth and the recognition of its potential by educators and parents continues to grow nationwide. After school enrichment programs and special class offerings often include training in the Martial Arts because of the positive effects that such training has on students generally, and on "at-risk" youth specifically. With the knowledge and with the cumulative experience of Master Straga's Karate Academy, the most effective and highest quality instruction will be offered to the children, then teachers, other faculty members, administrators as well as parents, in an appealing and exciting program.

The Future Leaders Foundation is well prepared to meet the demands of children in our community who are in need of this aggressive and positive approach to our burgeoning social problems.

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**GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

Through martial arts principles and philosophies, the Future Leaders Foundation will provide a structured, goal oriented, educational, and highly motivating martial arts program to our children. They will learn to set goals and work hard to achieve them. Each new belt level, from their first color belt, to achievement of first degree black belt status, will provide incentive and reward, thereby developing determination and confidence.

---

**FAMILY/ BROTHERHOOD**

Camaraderie established among peers will break all barriers of race, gender and age, providing a true sense of pride and belonging. Future Leaders Foundation students will train together as family, creating a harmonious environment in which each student earns respect and acceptance through his or her efforts.

---

**RESPECT FOR LIFE**

Future Leaders Foundation students will learn and practice traditional values of honor and respect for:

- parents, teachers and authority
- established rules and regulations
- one's own life
- life of others
- property of others
- martial art

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**TOOLS FOR LIFE**

The Future Leaders Foundation will develop, through an educational and highly motivating martial arts training program, tools early on in a child's life that will be at the child's disposal throughout the trying years to come. These tools are:

- healthy mind and body
- positive attitude
- discipline
- concentration
- focus
- self esteem
- self conviction
- leadership
- good character
- strong will
- peace of mind
- self-reliance

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**REWARDS AND BENEFITS APPLIED**

The rewards of the training will include respect for authority, improved concentration and behavior in and out of the classroom with noticeable improvement in school attendance and academic performance.

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**EVALUATION**

The Administrative Director of the program will communicate regularly with school superintendents, principles, teachers and Future Leaders Foundation instructors. From the inception of the program, and running continuously throughout the program, there will be a study to track behavior and academic progress of students participating in the Future Leaders Foundation program.

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**PARENTS & CHILDREN**

The Future Leaders Foundation will encourage parents to support their children by attending program activities as well as training in martial arts. Parents training with their children has proven to bridge the generation gap, strengthen bonds, and develop pride within the family unit.

**TARGET LOCATION**

Atlantic County, New Jersey has been selected as the primary focus for the initial phase of the program with the goal of establishing programs in elementary schools in each of the County's 19 cities.

**FINANCING & EXPANSION**

The Foundation's initial need is for funding to implement this program in our primary target cities. Our ultimate plan is for further growth throughout Atlantic County, New Jersey and eventually nationwide.

Our first concern is to implement Future Leaders Foundation programs strongly within our community. There will be special attention to developing the best possible curriculum for students at each school, and most importantly there will be patience and caution when determining steps for expansion.

**ADMINISTRATION**

The Future Leaders Foundation is comprised of men and women who are dedicated martial artists with the Foundation mission at heart. They are also leaders in the academy, business world, Atlantic County community.

**Chairman**

Master D. Straga

**Trustees:**

Deborah Wehrhan, 5th Dan  
Elaine Orsi, 4th Dan  
John Van Epps, 2nd Dan

Timothy Tighe, 5th Dan  
Lisa Straga, 2nd Dan  
Neil Stackhouse Esq., 2<sup>nd</sup> Gup

**Advisory Board:**

Mr. Paul Chila, Principal  
Dr. Joy Miller, Asst. Superintendent  
Mr. Robert Garguilo, Superintendent  
Mr. Kenneth Moore, Principal  
Reverend Brian Roberts, MDIV, MBA, Pastor  
Dr. Joseph Mosley, Psychologist  
Mr. Dennis Duffy, Civil Engineer  
Mr. Rick Baehrle, President, CEO, Vanguard Property  
Mr. Marc Laguardia, Bank Examiner  
Mrs. Janet Festa, Teacher

Ms. Antonina Mitchell, Teacher  
Mrs. Eleanor Getzke, RN  
Mr. Dennis Gomes, Pres. Resort Operations Tropicana  
Mrs. Ernestine Zeli-Bove, Guidance Counselor  
Mr. David Kligerman, President, CEO AkPharma  
Mrs. Ronee Groff, President/LDA  
Mr. Stephen Armstrong, President Otter Creek Graphics  
Mr. Barry Durman, President KMS Software

**Contributors:**

The Kligerman Foundation, Inc.  
Asian World of Martial Arts, Inc.  
Weinstein Supply, Inc.  
C&B Webs, Inc.  
McDonalds, Corp.  
Tang Soo Karate Academy  
David and Joan Kligerman  
Laurence Kligerman  
Cindy Lou Owen, MSW  
Neil Stackhouse

Fair Consulting Inc.  
Maintained Domain, Inc.  
PNC Bank  
OCI, Inc.  
Ocean City Home Bank  
Stephen and Sallie Straga  
Roland and Suzanne George  
Drs. Andrea and Robert Solomon  
Savaradios Restaurant

Other generous individuals wishing to remain anonymous

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## **HISTORY**

Master D. Straga, a sixth degree Black Belt, has trained under some of the greatest Tang Soo Do Masters in the world. Master Straga began teaching Martial Arts in the Atlantic County area in 1977. Having taught thousands of students, producing Masters and hundreds of Black Belts, today Master Straga's Tang Soo Do Academy is one of the largest and most successful in the nation. He is highly respected for his dedication, character, honor and technical abilities. Additionally, his leadership qualities and teaching abilities have had a positive influence on the lives of children and adults in our community.

Furthermore, Master Straga has chaired and co-chaired many fund raising events during the past twenty years through annual, national karate tournament and demonstrations, which benefit the American Cancer Society, Muscular Dystrophy, and various New Jersey Police Departments.

Master Straga's goal since 1994 has been to form a Foundation that would enable him and his Black Belts to reach the children in our community on a much broader scale. Thus the Future Leaders Foundation was formed in 1995, incorporated, May 24, 1996, and received its 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status on November 4, 1996.

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## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

The Future Leaders Foundation offers a special innovative program, working in partnership with existing classes, teachers and administrators in the elementary school system. The Future Leaders Foundation program entwines with the New Jersey State Core Curriculum standards, and does not replace any existing curricula.

The Future Leaders Foundation program will function as a part of the established school curriculum for physical education. The Foundation will introduce martial arts, and provide a three year program to the children of grade levels K through 4<sup>th</sup>.

The classes will be conducted in a room within, or immediately adjacent to, the participating Elementary School and devoted to martial arts training. Of the 150 minutes required weekly by the New Jersey State Core Curriculum Standards for Physical Education, we will provide 90 minutes of instruction.

All students must attend 2 training sessions per week throughout each school year for three consecutive years. We will serve 120 children at any one time by providing instruction for 8 groups of children, 4 groups each day, 2 days per week, and the fifth day the instructor will be available for makeup classes, and for conferences with teachers, students, parents, or administrators. A waiting list will be established to replace any children not able to maintain their commitment.

The Future Leaders Foundation program cost is \$615.00 per child, annually. The Future Leaders Foundation will work with the school system to provide necessary funding.

After school and summer school programs will be available to family, faculty and students of all ages. Additionally, demonstrations, workshops, testing and tournaments will be offered through the Future Leaders Foundation.





Cost for our

Mindfulness Program

Available Upon Request

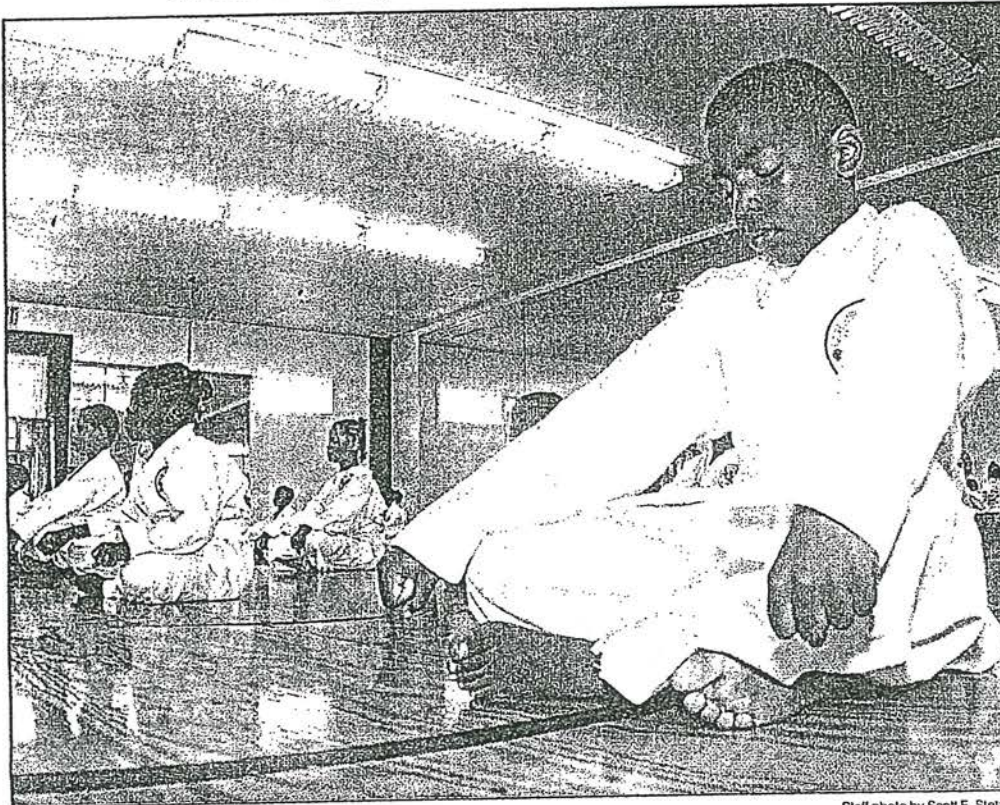
# The Press

OF ATLANTIC CITY

JULY 30, 1998

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©1998 South Jersey Publishing Co.

Don Straga and the Pleasantville School District have teamed to offer free karate classes to about 200 students from the North Main Street elementary school. The program teaches discipline and respect.



Staff photo by Scott E. Stetzer

Anthony Washington meditates during a karate class Wednesday at the Tang Soo Do martial arts academy. The sessions are paid for by instructor Don Straga through a nonprofit foundation he developed.

Atlantic County Superintendent Martin Ney.

Pleasantville Superintendent Odete Silva said she "grabbed the idea" when she heard about it last fall.

"I liked it because it brings the community into the schools to partner with us, to provide services that can be accomplished by outside entities," she said.

Straga's foundation pays for the classes, including the uniforms. The lessons run about 45 minutes and typically involve 25 to 30 students.

Parents sign permission slips to allow their children to participate. Contact fighting isn't allowed, Straga said. The children do not hit each other.

At first, he said, the hardest challenge was in getting the children to pay attention.

"Their behavior was unruly and we had to fight through that, but after a while we got them to think about respect and discipline," he said. "That's what this is about."

The challenge now lies in trying to raise funds to continue the program. Most of the expense for instructors and uniforms came from his own pocket. With more funding, he said, the program could reach other schools and districts.

On Wednesday, as the karate master yelled commands, his students responded in sharp, quick movements. Straga paced amongst the rows, correcting a student's posture or position as he passed.

Patricia Patterson stood under an archway and grinned, watching as her eight-year-old son, Anthony Washington, kicked and snapped his arms forward and back.

"I'm very proud," she said. "He's trying to focus on all of it. It's good for him."

## Karate master kicks in to help teach Pleasantville students

By RICHARD SHOPES  
Staff Writer

PLEASANTVILLE — The class just ended and Don Straga's weary students are traipsing toward the locker rooms, bare feet across a lacquered floor, when a teacher approaches.

Two students need more instruction, she tells him. The karate master nods, waves the girls over, and for the next five minutes they sit cross-legged, foreheads pressed together, eyeing one another.

"They had an argument," Straga explains, shrugging, as the rest of his charges head to the exits with their parents. "They have to learn to respect each other."

So goes another class at the Tang Soo Do martial arts academy — the school district's most visible and recent ally in an effort to instill respect and discipline in students.

Linked to a larger, districtwide mentoring program, Straga and the school district have teamed to offer free karate classes to about 200 students from the North Main Street elementary school.

The twice-a-week lessons began two months ago and

run through the summer. On Tuesday night, the Board of Education voted to extend the program through the coming school year, officially incorporating the classes into North Main Street's physical education program.

Straga and district officials insist the classes offer more than a workout.

"The students learn discipline and self-reliance," Principal Kenneth Moore said. "There's even more seriousness about their school work."

Straga said he was motivated to work with an elementary school after noting how drugs and peer pressure influence children. He developed the nonprofit Future Leaders Foundation and, about a year ago, began meeting with superintendents to pitch his idea of including martial arts in school.

The notion is slowly capturing attention elsewhere in the country.

Most notably, actor and martial arts expert Chuck Norris has worked with schools in Texas. No where in New Jersey is this happening, though, according to

# North Main students learn karate at Tang Soo Academy



From left, Board of Education President Jerome Page, Master Don Straga, and North Main St. School Principal Ken Moore.

Because of the involvement of Don Straga and his Tang Soo Karate Academy, violence among North Main Street School students who are involved in Master Straga's pilot karate program has dropped 80 percent. They became students at the Academy, thanks to Straga, a 6th degree Master of Tang Soo Do karate, the martial art practiced at his Academy at 401 N. Main Street, located a block from the elementary school.

The change in the children's behavior is simple, Master Straga says. "Students learn about self control. That's how it all starts."

Using the rule that his students are accountable for their deeds, the Academy lessons build respect for other people by their deeds. "All people come together as one through martial arts school," Master Straga says. Students taught Tang Soo Do learn discipline and how to set goals. "This gets them respect for each other and themselves, and helps them develop confidence," he adds.

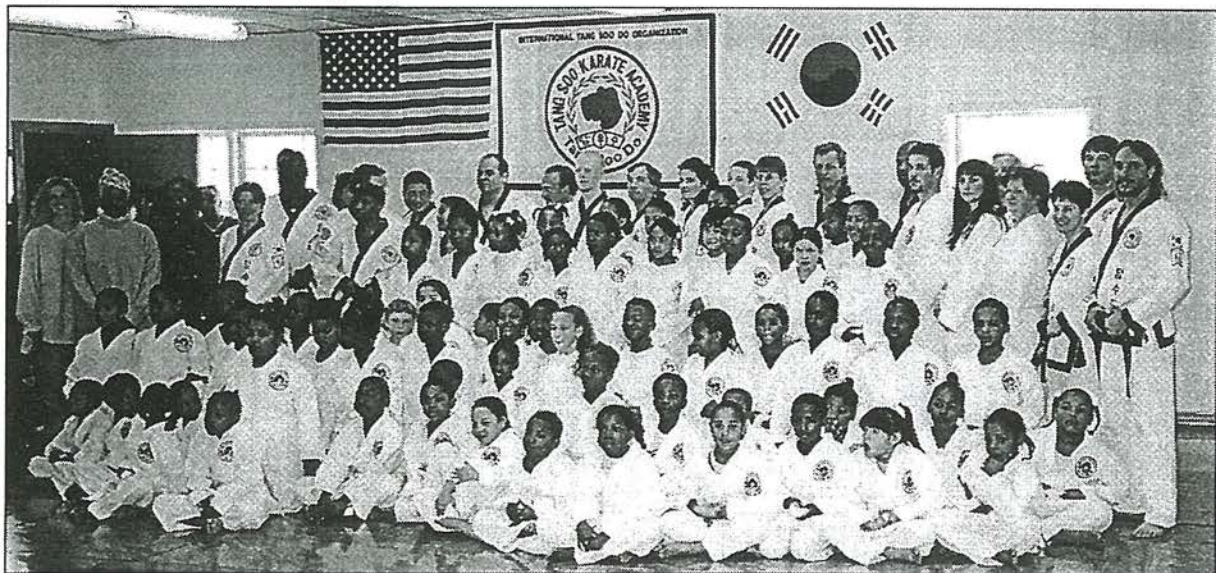
(Continued on next page)



Practicing Tang Soo Do one step fighting.



Master Straga presents belts and certificates.



North Main Street School students in the Tang Soo Karate Academy shown at the promotional test of the Future Leaders Foundation Program.

# Master Straga's Foundation promotes leadership

(Continued from Page 16)

Into its second year, the pilot program is the project of Master Straga's non-profit Future Leaders Foundation. The mission of the Future Leaders Foundation is to develop leadership qualities in children at an early age. Using marital arts as a vehicle, the program develops strong will, strength in character, and the tools that are necessary to combat negative influences and drug-related peer pressures.

"The results of the Future Leaders Foundation program at the North Main Street School have been monumental," Master Straga said. "Our goals are to implement our programs throughout Atlantic County, and eventually nation-wide."

North Main Street School Principal Kenneth Moore said of the first year's results, "Student achievement has increased and incidences of inappropriate behavior have been reduced. Occurrences of violence and vandalism have plummeted from last school year by 80 percent. Suspensions are down and student attendance is up! Also, parents are highly pleased to see that their children have matured. They have been more responsible at home, more self-motivated to achieve, and are a positive role model for their younger siblings."

The children receive 45-minute karate lessons twice a week. This Board of Education approved program supplements the physical education program.

Ernestine Zeli-Bove, Guidance Counselor at North Main, is very active in the program. In her letter to Gov. Christine Whitman, requesting program support, she wrote, "In the process of learning karate and making great strides in physical development, the children also gain improved relations with their teachers and parents. This program has also reduced occurrences of negative behavior. It uses conflict as a



Students demonstrate their jumping ability.



Practicing Tang Soo Do kick techniques.

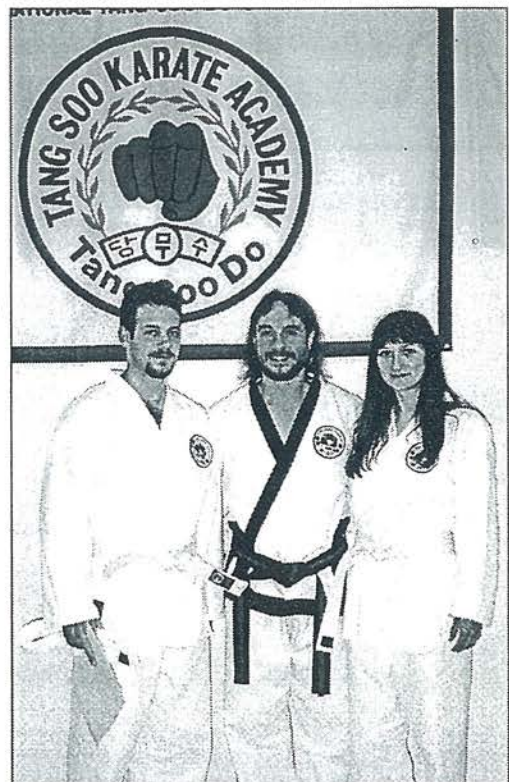


Master Elaine Orsi and North Main Street School Guidance Counselor Ernestine Zeli-Bove.

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From left, Lisa Straga, Master Orsi and Master Tighe.



North Main Street School Teachers Mark Santanello and Liza Levitt with Master Straga.

## Tang Soo Karate Academy...

(Continued from Page 17)

chance to teach the children more appropriate problem-solving skills. Indeed, our students are fortunate to have Master Straga in their community. It is rare to find an individual who is willing to undertake such a long-term project. Through his program, he has been a source of inspiration, support, and positive reinforcement to each and every child learning Tang Soo Do."

Master Straga and the Foundation pay for the students' karate uniforms and instruction. Additional funding is being sought through donations and grant writing, to implement the Future Leaders Foundation programs in other elementary schools.

As a student at Tang Soo Karate Academy, David Kligerman, President/CEO of Pleasantville's AkPharma, Inc., wrote Gov. Whitman supporting the Future Leaders Foundation. He said, "The Academy focuses on the family, but specifically on at-risk children." His letter spoke of the increased parental involvement and the improved conduct of the children since becoming students at the Academy. "It simply is something you must see for yourself," he said.

Master Straga is inspired by his wife Lisa, a 2nd degree Black Belt who never waivers in her commitment to excellence. He is especially grateful for Master Elaine Orsi, a 4th degree Black Belt and a driving force in the program. He credits his trustees as well as many other Black Belt instructors, students and friends who have helped to further the cause.

"We've developed leaders through our Belt Ranking System," Master Straga said. "They are forming a nice community where they appreciate and respect each other. The students' unity and brotherhood transcends race, gender, and age, creating harmony, where the children encourage each other, leading by example, earning respect and acceptance through their individual efforts. This program is vastly important to our children socially, emotionally, and academically. It taps into every area a child needs to be a whole person.

As Principal Moore said, "Master Straga has gone above and beyond in sponsoring free



Students practice their kicks.

karate training for our students and has given new meaning to the phrase, 'Partners in Education.'"

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information on the Future Leaders Foundation, contact Master Don Straga at (609) 646-8855 or at the website: [www.futureleader.org](http://www.futureleader.org)

**NOTE: January 28th is the end of the 2nd Marking Period.**

## MASTER D. STRAGA TANG SOO Karate ACADEMY

### ● Classes ●

- Morning, Afternoon & Evening ●
- Men, Women & Children
- Special Family Rates ●

*Home of*

### FUTURE LEADERS FOUNDATION

*Harmony • Peace • Brotherhood*

Developing Leadership Qualities  
in our Children using  
Martial Arts as The Vehicle

Call Today

# 646-8855

401 N. Main Street Pleasantville, NJ 08232

**PRIDE** spotlight on...

# Tang Soo Karate Academy

**Master Don Straga**, a sixth degree Black Belt, is owner and instructor of the Pleasantville Tang Soo Karate Academy, 401 N. Main St. He has dedicated 25 years to training and teaching the art of Tang Soo Do. Master Straga opened his first academy in 1977 in Ventnor and moved to Pleasantville in 1982. Presently he operates one of the largest and most successful karate academies in the nation.

**Tang Soo Do** is a Korean-style martial art, influenced by China. "It is a brotherhood and a school of stopping inner and outer conflict and developing virtue by way of the worthy hand," Master Straga said. "We get along as if we were family with Tang Soo Do. Harmony, brotherhood and peace are developed with this art." The martial art is a way of living -- watching diet, exercising, and meditating to develop peace and calm for achieving balance, he said. "The discipline helps a student cope with life."

**Master Straga has trained** under some of the greatest Tang Soo Do Masters in the world. Grand Master Jae Chul Shin, Grand Master Chun Sik Kim and Master Dominick Giacobbe. Master Straga is highly respected for character, loyalty, honor and technique. He has been a devoted student to Master Giacobbe for over 20 years. Together they have appeared on national and local TV and have brought notoriety and honor to the art via magazine and newspaper articles. They developed the Tang Soo Karate Academy name to be one of the most respected organizations in the martial arts community.

**Over \$400,000 for the American Cancer Society** has been raised by Masters Straga and Giacobbe with their annual Fight for Cancer National Karate Championships in Atlantic City. People come from all over the country to compete. And his students work for the Tournament putting up flyers, demonstrating techniques and judging competitions. "Many people's lives have been devastated by cancer," Master Straga said. "We take our strength and put it in positive directions to help the cause."

**Master Straga's** leadership qualities and teaching abilities have had a positive influence on children, adults and communities within the Atlantic County area. He has developed students into Masters and promoted hundreds to rank of Black Belt throughout his career.

**A sponsor of** Teacher Antonina Mitchell's class at North Main Street School, Master Straga has sponsored classes at the school for several years. He also offers an ongoing special Karate program to children at the Pleasantville Recreation Center.

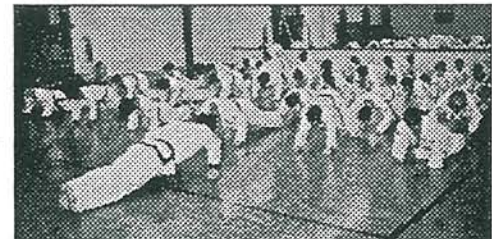
**Master Straga works** directly with his students promoting and developing discipline, concentration, respect and confidence in them. For further information, call 646-8855.



Karate Master Don Straga



A child's class for 5-to 10-year-olds practices one-step fighting for self defense.



Master Straga leads the class in knuckle push-ups.



Students with Master Straga sit in meditation, relaxing their minds and bodies in preparation for class.

# State of New Jersey



THE SENATE  
STATE HOUSE, TRENTON, N. J.

## SENATE RESOLUTION By Senator WHELAN

**WHEREAS**, October 9, 2010, marks the occasion of the Annual Freedom Fund Luncheon sponsored by the Mainland/Pleasantville Branch of the N.A.A.C.P., during which Donald Straga, a highly esteemed member of the Garden State community, will be honored and saluted in the category of Community Service; and,

**WHEREAS**, The Senate of the State of New Jersey is pleased to join the Mainland/Pleasantville Branch of the N.A.A.C.P. in recognizing Donald Straga for his outstanding efforts in behalf of the community; and,

**WHEREAS**, Donald Straga is the respected owner of a martial arts school in Pleasantville that has continued to serve youth and adults of the community for three decades; and,

**WHEREAS**, His uncommon level of public-spiritedness has also been made evident by his active participation and involvement in numerous civic groups and organizations, and he has given generously of his skill and expertise to provide free training programs as well as donated thousands of dollars raised through his karate tournaments; and,

**WHEREAS**, The people of the State of New Jersey are genuinely indebted to hard-working and inspiring citizens, personified by Donald Straga, whose time and energies are devoted to improving the effectiveness of their communities and the quality of life for their neighbors; and,

**WHEREAS**, Within all the spheres of his life and work, Donald Straga has established a model to emulate and set a standard of excellence toward which others might strive; now, therefore,

*Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:*

That this House hereby honors and salutes Donald Straga as the recipient of an N.A.A.C.P. Freedom Fund Award, pays tribute to his meritorious record of service, leadership, and commitment, and extends sincere best wishes for his continued success and happiness; and,

*Be It Further Resolved*, That a duly authenticated copy of this resolution, signed by the President and attested by the Secretary, be transmitted to Donald Straga.



*Stephen M. Sweeney*  
President of the Senate

Attest:

*Kent M. Hicks*  
Secretary of the Senate

ATLANTIC COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS  
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

*Proclamation*

*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga is a business proprietor operating the only successful continuous Martial Arts School in the heart of Pleasantville for the past 30 years; and

*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga has taught thousands of students, both adults and children, and his teaching methods instilling discipline, respect, honor, honesty and mental and physical strength; and

*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga's school provides a safe venue for children to participate, to sharpen their minds, bodies and meet and befriend children from all social economic, cultural, religious, racial backgrounds; and

*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga performs charity work by providing free training for some students in times of need and also operates a free training program for children at the Pleasantville Recreation Center under the Future Leaders Foundation; and

*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga has raised thousands of dollars to donate to cancer research via his karate tournaments held annually at various Atlantic City casinos; and


*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga's program of Martial Arts not only aids students who may be subjected to bullying, but also helps prevent students from becoming bullies;

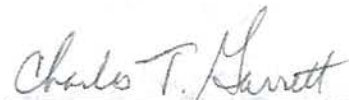
*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga's program assists students of all backgrounds stay on the straight and narrow by attending college and leading successful lives; and

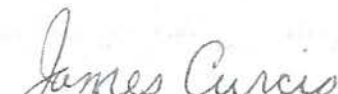
*Whereas*, Master Donald Straga is being honored by the Mainland/Pleasantville Branch of the NAACP for Community Service on October 9, 2010.

*Now, therefore, be it proclaimed* by the Atlantic County Board of Chosen Freeholders that this Board does hereby honor and congratulate **Master Donald Straga** on being the recipient of this prestigious award; and

*Be it further proclaimed* that this Board does hereby thank **Master Donald Straga** for his dedicated and unselfish service to the citizens of Atlantic County, New Jersey.

  
James E. Schroeder, Freeholder-at-Large

  
Charles T. Garrett, Freeholder - District 1

  
James Curcio, Chairman







# Atlantic County

## Executive Office

Richard E. Squires  
County Executive

609/343-2201 FAX: 343-2194  
TDD: 348-5551

### PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, Master D. Straga is a resident of Atlantic County who operates the Tang Soo Karate Academy in Pleasantville; and

**WHEREAS**, Tang Soo Do Karate emphasizes self-discipline and encourages students to grow mentally, physically, and spiritually; and

**WHEREAS**, Master D. Straga is a concerned citizen who has been involved in the affairs of his community and in cooperation with Master D. A. Giacobbe is a Sponsor and Assistant Director of the 1995 National Karate Championship Fight for Cancer; and

**WHEREAS**, through their on-going participation in this event Master D. A. Giacobbe and Master D. Straga have helped to raise more than \$358,000 for the American Cancer Society; and

**WHEREAS**, the 1995 National Karate Championship Fight for Cancer will be held on Saturday, August 12 and Sunday, August 13, 1995 at the Trump Taj Mahal in Atlantic City;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Richard E. Squires, County Executive of Atlantic County, proclaim Saturday, August 12 and Sunday, August 13, 1995 as

### TANG SOO DO DAYS

in Atlantic County and call upon the citizens of Atlantic County to join in support of the efforts of Master D. A. Giacobbe and Master D. Straga on behalf of the American Cancer Society and to practice the spirit of brotherhood, self-discipline, balance, and inner-harmony that is part of the philosophy of Tang Soo Do.



Richard E. Squires  
County Executive

Under my hand and seal this 4th  
day of August in the year 1995.



1333 Atlantic Avenue • Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401

Atlantic County is an Equal Opportunity Employer



## Short Quotes from each letter

“This program has a record of measurable results, and demands attention by any education system looking to involve the social, emotional, and academic growth of their students.”

Ronee Groff, President, LDANJ

“I realize that whatever handicaps I was born with, I can now deal with and control. I truly believe that all of this happened because of the Christmas gift my parents gave me four years ago.”

Matt Silva, 16 year old Black Belt

“The mental and spiritual strength that I have been taught have helped me with all aspects of my life”.

Marc LaGuardia, Red Belt

“Tang Soo Do has increased my children's' concentration and confidence level. Their teachers always say how polite my son and daughter are.”

Pat Stark, mother and student-red belt

“The clear goal oriented approach to Master Straga’s teaching methods produces clear positive results through hard work.”

Rick Wehrhan, father of student

“My three sons (Black Belts) have developed healthy bodies, great self confidence, good discipline, good awareness, and excellent study habits. I’ve had many positive comments from their teachers.”

Meri Wagner, mother of 3 students

“By learning respect, loyalty and discipline my life and school work has changed. Before karate, whenever I got mad, I could not control myself. I also learned how to stay away from danger.”

Robbie Garguilo, 10 year old Black Belt

“Master D. Straga’s deliberate actions impact student’s life long successes.”

Janet Festa, Teacher, Atlantic City High School

“The Future Leaders Foundation has been established to assist local school districts in continuing to enhance the philosophical beliefs of public education. I am recommending that this organization have the opportunity to become a member of our educational community.”

Robert Garguilo, Superintendent, Hammonton School System

“I noticed an improvement in self esteem among several of the students, a decrease in classroom fighting and a new respect for human life and body.”

Antonina Mitchell, Teacher September 1994

“Children eager to train, proud of what they are accomplishing with clear bright eyes and wide smiles.

Brian Roberts, Pastor April 1999

“Self discipline and motivation, responsibility and perseverance have carried over into the classroom and the school community. Occurrences of violence and vandalism have plummeted from last school year by 80%. Suspensions are down and student attendance is up!”

Kenneth B. Moore, Principal, North Main Street School May 1999

“Children also gain improved relations with their teachers and parents.”

Ernestine R. Zeli-Bove, Guidance counselor April 1999

“This program could be considered a “primary prevention” intervention for children, providing children with experience, support and training to learn and to use effective problem-solving and coping skills.”

Joseph R. Mosley, Ph.D. Licensed Psychologist

“This program has a great value in helping the students to work through problems, solve conflicts peacefully and show respect to one another. The greatest pleasure is watching my students take interest in the program and apply it to their lives.”

Mark Santanello, Teacher N. Main Street School

“The martial arts program has helped my students by emphasizing the importance of self control and self reliance. This training has helped my students to develop independence, accept accountability for the choices that they make.”

Constance L. Days, Teacher N. Main Street School May 1999

“Master Straga stresses in importance of focus, respect and self control as tools in both karate and all aspects of life. Master Straga also fulfills the role of a positive male figure for our students. He is most certainly someone to be admired and emulated.”

Liza Levitt, Teacher N. Main Street School

“It has helped to develop them, not only physically, but also emotionally, mentally and socially.”

Annie Christiani, Teacher N. Main Street School May 1999

“The confidence that is growing in my children is amazing. They feel good about themselves when they accomplish something in karate. This carries over in their desire to do better in school. This program is invaluable to our children.”

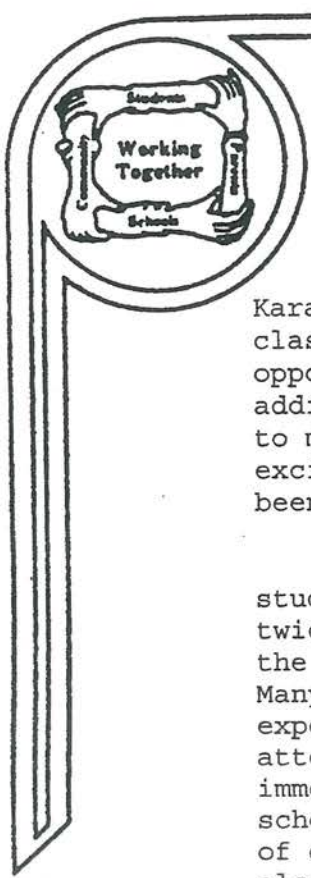
Brandy Neunson, Teacher N. Main Street School

“This is a good opportunity for these students to learn self discipline and self control. And it also teaches them self respect.”

Deborah A. Collins-Rice, Teacher N. Main Street School

“Master Straga now dedicates a vast amount of time, energy and resources toward teaching students the tools necessary to successfully navigate the maze of situational decision making in today's difficult world.”

David B.Kligerman, President/Chief Operating Officer AkPharma, Inc.



**PLEASANTVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
NORTH MAIN STREET SCHOOL  
215 NORTH MAIN STREET  
PLEASANTVILLE, N.J. 08232-2102

MR. KENNETH B. MOORE  
Principal  
383-6889

MR. JEFFREY A. STERN  
Assistant Principal  
383-6905

In September 1994, I was appointed to have Tang Soo Karate Academy and Master Donald Straga as my 6th grade classroom sponsor. Master Straga offered my class the opportunity to take Karate lessons free of charge. In addition, he also provided uniforms, belts, and patches to my students. My students were very responsive and excited for this opportunity, which otherwise would have been financially out of their reach.

In November 1994, a total of 14 out of my 22 students eagerly signed up for Karate lessons. We met twice a week for one hour each night and experienced all the wonderful skills and training Karate had to offer. Many students found the Karate lessons a valuable experience and dedicated their time to faithfully attending classes. Five students, in particular, showed immediate changes in their attitude and reactions to school. These five students began to show a great deal of dedication to their homework and class assignments. I also noticed a great deal of energy and respect for others that attribute to Master Straga's strict yet caring training. Karate taught all of my students self discipline, respect, exercises for both body and mind and martial arts training. My students also learned Korean words, phrases and an understanding of another culture.

As a teacher, I noticed an improvement in self-esteem among several of the students who participated on a regular basis. Moreover, a decrease in classroom fighting was extremely evident and I noticed a new respect for human life and body.

Several students, prior to Karate training, were quiet, withdrawn, and did not participate in classroom activities. I feel because they took an active part in Karate class these students were no longer intimidated in the classroom setting. I saw students who did not have friendship bonds begin to make friends, improving their overall attitude.

In the classroom, students that continued Karate training had a positive increase in grades as well as in

the quality of their homework assignments. These students showed a greater respect for teachers, in general, as well as for myself, which was not as evident prior to their involvement in Karate. The students who chose to discontinue the Karate lessons tended to decrease in the homework gains that they had made as well as in their overall classroom attitude. These students no longer seemed to dedicate their time and energy to the importance of academics.

I reviewed various grades throughout the school year and found that students involved in Karate training had an overall increase in better grades and in the quality of their assignments. Report card grades became important to these students. I kept Master Straga informed of their improvements and efforts. Furthermore, the students kept their grades up in order to please two "teachers," Master Straga and myself. This effort made their self-esteem and self-worth skyrocket in a positive direction. My class did exceptionally well on the state standardized tests, scoring much higher than many of the other 6th grade classes in the area that were not involved in Karate training. I attribute much of this success to the confidence and success they felt for themselves during their experience with Martial Arts training.

By the end of the school year, nine students remained actively involved and benefited from Karate training. Their grades, attitude and self-esteem also continued in an upward direction. They looked forward to seeing Master Straga, their Karate classmates and myself in class each week. We discussed in our classroom their improved strength in and out of Tang Soo Karate Academy. We also discussed how proud we were of their dedication to the art and their overall improvement in grades. Most importantly, they were proud of themselves for their own accomplishments. Master Straga would discuss goals, the importance of education and to never give up during his classes. He taught self-control, respect and loyalty, all of which are important attributes in a child. My students looked up to Master Straga and the others who helped to train them in Tang Soo Karate Academy. I felt a huge amount of comfort and support with all members of the Academy.

At the close of the school year, we had a North Main Street School Sponsor Parade in which all members of my class participated. Together, we made banners, exhibited our skills and abilities and as a grand finale we broke boards of wood with our hands. This made my class the talk of the town and we were voted number 1 by the judges. The pride of my students was the most satisfying event for me as their teacher. To this day, many students throughout the school still discuss the parade and our routines. My students are now in ninth grade, and I know they will take this experience and what they learned under the instruction of Master Straga with them throughout their lives. This experience was enriching for all who participated. I will always be grateful to Tang Soo Karate Academy for giving my students such a wonderfully positive experience.

The following year, the same opportunity was offered to my 6th grade class at North Main Street School. Master Straga gave my students an opportunity that I knew from experience could only benefit them. Once again, the students eagerly signed up for lessons. The results for this class were similar to those of the previous year. As a teacher, I found these experiences to be rewarding and beneficial to the students as well as to myself.

*Nina Mitchell*  
Nina Mitchell, Teacher



# Hammonton Middle School

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**Nick De Rosa**  
PRINCIPAL

101 Central Avenue  
Hammonton, New Jersey 08037  
(609) 567-7007

**Robert A. Garguilo**  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

June 12, 1997

To Whom It May Concern:

As educators, we strive to develop school communities that are founded on the principles of structured, goal oriented, highly motivational, educational programs with a direction towards high academic standards. In developing these communities we endeavor to include parents, local community organizations, and business partnerships. By including these groups we become a more cohesive and unified organization.

The Future Leaders Foundation has been established to assist local school districts in continuing to enhance the philosophical beliefs of public education. Master D. Straga, Chairman, has taken his vision for today's youth and has established this organization for this purpose.

I have personally and professionally known Master Straga for six consecutive years. Through the Tang Soo Do Academy, my ten year old son, Robert, has trained under Master Straga and recently received his Black Belt in Tang Soo Do. I sincerely believe that my son would not be the person he is today if not for Master Straga and the philosophical beliefs of Martial Arts.

With a high respect for Master Straga and the Future Leaders Foundation, I am recommending that this organization have the opportunity to become a member of our educational community. I believe that in cooperation with our school districts, their goals and implementation design's would be valuable assets in developing character, respect, and dedication to school, peers and family.

If I can be of any further assistance, please contact me at (609) 567-7030.

Respectfully,

Robert A. Garguilo  
Assistant Principal, Hammonton Middle School  
Principal, Sooy Elementary School, July 1997

**Atlantic City High School  
1400 Albany Avenue  
Atlantic City, NJ 08401  
343-7300 Ext.373 (V.M.)**

**To whom it may concern:**

**June 27, 1997**

**For each student Master D. Straga begins with the end in mind. This high performing teacher seeks out opportunities to learn about his students more personally, takes an active part in encouraging their enthusiasm, guides their choices and boosts their self-esteem. The more your students trust and respect you, the more they will give to you. Master D. Straga is firm and compassionate setting high standards and helping students strive to achieve realistic goals. In recognition of students' varied needs Master D. Straga's deliberate actions impact student's life long successes. His high performing students overcome challenges with focus on believing in self, considering realistic goals and striving for goals. Master D. Straga sets examples which students can and should replicate to pass on to the next generation.**

**Class at Tang Soo Karate Academy begins with a well defined supportive learning environment. Master D. Straga's energized presentations include strategies for independent and collaborative thinking manifesting all students to be motivated and engaged in high involvement and active learning.**

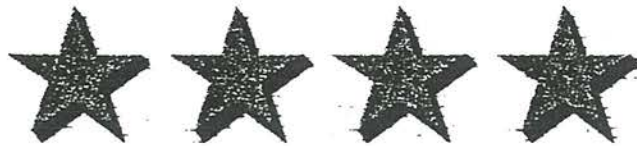
**If students are to reach their full potential, they need the support and encouragement of an entire community of concerned, caring adults. That community includes all of us. It especially includes students' parents. The education of children is a responsibility that must be shared by the teacher and parent alike. To work effectively, teachers need parents to support their academic, disciplinary and homework efforts. The value Master D. Straga places on each child's education, and the manner in which he communicates that attitude to**



parents transcends varying family circumstances, ethnic and cultural diversity, poverty and apathy. Master D. Straga expects and receives cooperation. An involved parent can provide the boost to a student's self-esteem that will lead to greater success in school and a more fulfilling and accomplished adulthood.

As a parent, with two children at Tang Soo Karate Academy, I am delighted by Master D. Straga's program especially because of the reinforcement my children receive regarding principles toward good character. In addition, they are the recipients of expert training in Tang Soo Do. As an educator of high school students, the work ethic is not thriving and neither will society. It takes hard work to run a home and many people working harmoniously to run a community. Societal success is contingent upon this strong foundation.

It is evident that Master D Straga's: Future Leaders Foundation is a valuable supplement toward the development of responsible adulthood, democratic citizenship, and productive work! It is my hope and recommendation that our school districts embrace this as part of the curriculum to be available for all students.



Sincerely,  
*Mrs. Janet Festa*  
Mrs. Janet Festa  
Mathematics Teacher  
Atlantic City High School

## Tang Soo Do How it's Changed my life.

By: Robbie Garguilo

Tang Soo has changed my life in many ways. I have learned how to defend myself and to walk away from unnecessary fights. By learning respect, loyalty, and discipline, my life and school work has changed. I know what food is right for a martial artist. I believe you should never say I can't. I am very peaceful and respectful. Before Karate whenever I got mad, I could not control myself. I would scream and cry. Through karate, I have self-control. I am not disrespectful to anyone. I also learned how to stay away from danger.

I started karate when I was six years old. When I was that little, I thought you used karate to hurt people. But I was wrong. Karate teaches you to use your mind and not your fists. Tang Soo Do is also about understanding forms. I learned that they all took after animals, and the forms tell a story.

I get good grades and I never forget to do what I am told to do. I am very strict with my school work and karate. I am in great shape. I run at school and work on my knuckle pushups, situps, and squat jumps. Karate also keeps me in good shape.

I have learned about the History of Tang Soo Do. The priest Dal Ma Dai Sa invented the martial arts and the idea of the spirit, the mind, and the body. Karate is a brotherhood. That means we are like brother and sister.

I think I would never had made it this far without my parents. They supported me when I started. Even though there was times I did not want to go to class, they pushed me to go. They gave up a lot of their time to get me there and have always supported me.

John Toland has also helped me. He worked with me at school with my one steps, forms, and techniques. He also helped me study for my black belt test. All of the instructors have been important in my Karate program. They helped me learn all of the forms and showed me the correct way when I was wrong.

Master Straga has made me all that I am. He is like a father to me. He corrects all of my mistakes. He is very strict with me. That helps me stay focused and be in good shape. He is also my friend.

There are a lot of things karate has done for me. I think karate is a great place to learn how to defend yourself and become a better person. A lot of my friends say Karate is a waste of time. They say it does not work. Maybe for them, but not for me. It works for me. Nobody wants to pick fights with me or John because they respect what we have done. I think karate is the best thing that happen to me. I really love Tang Soo Do Karate Academy.

Tang Soo!



## LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION

305 North Lancaster Avenue  
Margate, New Jersey 08402  
(609) 823-5608

Ronée Groff  
President: LDA of New Jersey  
Administrator: LDA of Atlantic County

February 23, 2000

The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman  
Governor  
125 West State Street  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0001

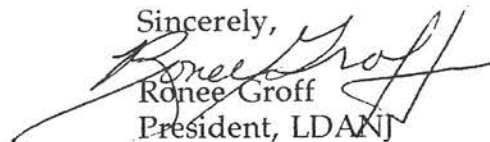
Dear Governor Whitman,

How exciting! A program that can challenge, change, and enrich the lives of our children! The Future Leaders Foundation, under the direction of Master Don Straga, and the Tang Soo Karate Academy, developed a win win program. After two years working with the Pleasantville School District, this program has a record of measurable results, and demands attention by any education system looking to involve and improve the social, emotional, and academic growth of their students.

Many of the children that we represent, children who have a daily struggle to meet standards and stay in school, would benefit greatly by this holistically sound program. Having observed the program and feeling inspired by the results, I believe deeply that all students can succeed through this remarkable program and the philosophy that drives it to success. Students turning around their lives and their attitudes towards learning and living.

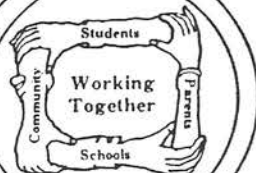
Basic lessons met for a life time such as being responsible, respectful, positively motivated to achieve as a learner, having self-discipline and self-respect, community aware and involved, reduced anger and aggression, self-control and self-reliance. In other words students ready to become our future fully engaged taxpaying citizens. We believe that if this program is started in the early years of a child's life it could make all the difference. We urge you to recommend that our NJ Department of Education and Department of Special Education observe and learn more about The Future Leaders Foundation program.

Sincerely,

  
Ronée Groff  
President, LDANJ  
Administrator, ACLDA

**PLEASANTVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

NORTH MAIN STREET SCHOOL  
215 NORTH MAIN STREET  
PLEASANTVILLE, N.J. 08232-2102



May 18, 1999

Dear Governor Whitman,

The second and third grade students at North Main Street School, Pleasantville, NJ have had a unique opportunity this school year. They received karate instruction at the Tang Soo Karate Academy. The instruction was provided by Master Straga and his staff and has affected positive changes in our school community and in the individual lives of the karate students.

Self-discipline and motivation, responsibility and perseverance have carried over into the classroom and the school community. Student achievement has increased and incidences of inappropriate behavior have been reduced. Occurrences of violence and vandalism have plummeted from last school year by 80%. Suspensions are down and student attendance is up!

Parents are also highly pleased to see that their children have matured. They have been more responsible at home, more self motivated to achieve and are a positive role model for their younger siblings.

Master Straga has gone above and beyond in sponsoring free karate training for our students and has given new meaning to the phrase, "Partners in Education."

Mr. Kenneth B. Moore,  
Principal North Main Street School



# The United Methodist Church at Absecon

100 Pitney Road • Absecon, New Jersey 08201-2009  
Church Office: (609) 641-1265 • Fax: (609) 641-5314

Rev. Brian C. Roberts, MDiv, MBA, Pastor

April 30, 1999

The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman  
Governor of the State of New Jersey  
Office of the Governor  
CN001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Whitman,

I am writing to share my excitement about a program that is changing the lives of young people in Pleasantville. This dynamic program has the potential to make a significant difference in children and schools throughout Atlantic County and the across New Jersey.

I am referring to the **Future Leaders Foundation** under the leadership of Master Donald Straga. The program is designed to provide martial arts training which entails discipline, self confidence and strengthening of the body, mind and spirit.

I have witnessed first hand as youngsters have gone from lacking focus, eyes downcast, and disrespectful of themselves and their teachers to children eager to train, proud of what they are accomplishing, with clear bright eyes and wide smiles. While I knew that this experience would help these young people I have been overwhelmed by the scope of the transformation.

I have trained at the Tang Soo Do Karate Academy for nearly four years. I sought out this training to further integrate mind, body and spirit. I have at times assisted in Future Leaders Foundation classes and have witnessed first hand what caring direction, setting goals, providing training and support can do.

It is difficult to describe in words the impact of this program. The most powerful way to understand the program is to witness a class, speak with Master Straga, teachers and students. I would like to add my invitation to others asking you to make time in your busy schedule for an uplifting visit. This is a program that does not just work in theory it is working in the lives of elementary school students in a southern New Jersey City.

Thank you for considering this invitation and for the leadership you provide our great state.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Roberts  
Pastor



**PLEASANTVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

NORTH MAIN STREET SCHOOL  
215 NORTH MAIN STREET  
PLEASANTVILLE, N.J. 08232-2102

April 30, 1999

Dear Governor Whitman:

I would like to take a few minutes to tell you about the Tang Soo Do Karate Program at North Main Street School in Pleasantville, as I see it from the perspective of the guidance office.

Parenting and teaching are not easy under the best of conditions. Pleasantville is a unique town with some very special needs. Many of our students are being raised by grandparents, foster parents or parents who have to work day and night to survive; and unfortunately, some of our children are raising themselves.

The Tang Soo Do Karate Program is the result of many diligent volunteers who have been willing to put the children in our community first. The children at North Main Street School receive karate lessons for 45 minutes twice a week. This is a Board approved program which supplements our physical education program. This is the second year for the program.

In the process of learning karate and making great strides in physical development, the children also gain improved relations with their teachers and parents. At a typical Back to School Night, we can expect 20 - 30 parents. When the children in the Tang Soo Do Karate Program took their test to receive their Yellow Belts there was at least one parent (and whole families) present for each child taking the test. We have never experienced such overwhelming support from the parents for any other program the school has offered.

This program has also reduced occurrences of negative behavior. It uses conflict as a chance to teach the children more appropriate problem-solving skills. It allows children to identify problems and ways that they can deal with the problem more effectively in the future.

Indeed, our students are fortunate to have Master Straga in their community. It is rare to find an individual who is willing to undertake such a long term project. Through his program he has been a source of inspiration, support, and positive reinforcement to each

and every child learning Tang Soo Do. My respect for him has deepened over the course of his endeavor. I hope you will find it possible to help support this worthy project.

Sincere regards,

*Ernestine R. Zeli-Bove*

Ernestine R. Zeli-Bove  
Student Personnel Services



**JOSEPH R. MOSLEY, PhD.**  
Bayside Commons  
501 Bay Avenue, Suite 105  
Somers Point, New Jersey 08244  
(609) 926-4644 • FAX (609) 926-6855

Licensed Psychologist  
NJ # 2498

Diagnostics, Psychotherapy, Consultation  
Adults, Children, Adolescents

April 30 1999

Christine Todd Whitman  
Governor of New Jersey  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, N.J. 08625

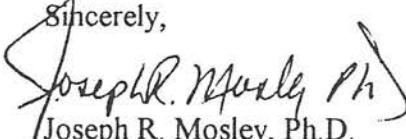
Dear Governor Whitman:

I would like to tell about an interesting program for children in Atlantic County, New Jersey. The Future Leaders Foundation has started a Karate training program for second, third and fourth grade students at the North Main Street Pleasantville School. This training is highly innovative with goal of developing long term changes in attitude, self-confidence, academic performance, and discipline. This program could be considered a "primary prevention" intervention for children, providing children with experience, support, and training to learn and to use effective problem-solving and coping skills. The unique aspect of this program is the application of the philosophy, discipline, training, and respect from martial arts to impact self-respect, attitude, academic success, and social acceptance.

I have assisted with the organization of a pilot study research project for the Future Leaders Foundation program. Observations and reports suggest that the children demonstrate improvement in their attitude, training, and discipline. The children also present a noticeable change in attitude and respect within their school. I have also been informed that several children in the program earned a listing on the school honor roll. Data for this pilot study are collected from several measures including self-esteem, sociometric ratings, and academic grades. This data were collected in the beginning and at various points during the training. The first set of comparative data will be ready soon for analysis.

Thank for the opportunity to tell you about this innovative approach toward providing children with the skills and experiences that support their adjustment and success within their community.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph R. Mosley, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist

JRM:gdk

May 14, 1999

The Honorable Christine Todd Whitman  
Governor  
125 West State St.  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0001

Dear Governor Whitman,

I am the former creator and director of several youth programs geared toward today's at-risk youth. The programs I ran involved juveniles and scuba diving, camping, kayaking and the obvious self sufficient skills needed to conduct oneself properly and safely. However my programs are not meant to be the subject of this letter.

I am writing to you in the wake of the recent Columbine shootings, to acknowledge that there are programs that do address young peoples lives in a way that may prove to minimize future violent bouts of acting out. My wife and I have been a part of one such program for the last 4 years. It is Tang Soo Do.

Tang Soo Do is a 2000 year old Korean martial art taught here in New Jersey as well as other states. But this particular school that I go to is different. Let me tell you why.

The Pleasantville Tang Soo Do Karate Academy, owned and operated by Master Don Straga, a 7<sup>th</sup> degree Master, his wife Lisa, a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree Black Belt and a host of loyal Masters and Black belts focus not only on the family, but specifically on at risk children. Master Straga in addition to running a regular school for paying customers, runs thousands of free classes for the local at-risk youth population. If it were not for my own experiences as a Tang Soo Do student and my first hand observations of the positive effect of this particular martial art on young people, taught by Master Straga, I might not believe it. It simply is something you must see for your self.

Master Straga now dedicates a vast amount of time, energy and resources toward teaching students the tools necessary to successfully navigate the maze of situational decision making in today's difficult world.

First Master Straga created The Future Leaders Foundation, a 501c3 organization. Next he concentrated on the Pleasantville Recreational center, teaching hundreds of kids (free of charge) not only the skills necessary to protect themselves from violent interactions,

but also the skills that help establish positive self-esteem, self control and the always too simplified and grossly underestimated ability to simply say NO.

Master Straga has now broadened his endeavors to include the local Pleasantville elementary school. The elementary school is one block away from the Tang Soo Do Academy and the students flow back and forth between The Tang Soo Do Academy and the elementary school reminiscent of the way that blood flows back and forth between the heart and its surrounding organs. Pardon the analogy but I am speaking about what I consider to be life-sustaining skills.

O.K., so what are those skills I'm referring to? Discipline, respect, honor, family values, strength in abilities, belief in one's self, belief in one's future and the ability to visualize and imagine what life could be like, taken one step at a time. These, of course, are only some of the core tools needed to be successful, and they are all taught in the setting of Tang Soo Do and The Future Leaders Foundation.

There is a current study being conducted to determine the extent to which the skills taught by Master Straga in the martial arts setting, are in fact transferable into the school, home and community setting. With the volunteer support of the school counselor and a local well respected psychologist gathering the data, preliminary results are proving to be strongly favorable toward the reduction of altercations, increased self esteem and a rise in grades.

I must clarify at this point that I was there that first day the children started the program. They came in, about 35 of them, hollering, fighting, antagonizing, disrespecting their teacher and disrespecting each other. It took one solid hour just to get them to stand still and pay attention, but discipline is important. Now four months later (two classes per week), when they come over from their school, they are quiet, they stand in a straight line, they hustle as they're getting ready for class, they are respectful of their teacher, their friends and the instructors at the Karate academy. Now they say YES SIR like they mean it, not because they have to. I knew that Tang Soo Do would have this effect on them. What I didn't know is that it would happen so quickly, and transfer immediately into their school life. What a pleasant surprise that it didn't take a year. Another funny thing happened: the parents came to see the kids take one of their Karate tests. Wow! Most of the kids' parents have little or no involvement in their kids' formal education. They normally don't even show up at the school when they are requested to. I say this, on information I received from the teachers in the school who were also amazed at the new amount of parental involvement. Somehow, learning a martial art was worth the parents' time, but what was going on in the elementary school was not. This I found most interesting.

Governor, I urge you to take the time to visit and witness for yourself the effectiveness of the Future Leaders Foundation's Tang Soo Do program. It is a truly unique and effective program. Classes are held nearly every day. Would you please request one of your staff to call Master Don Straga at 609-646-8855 to set up an appointment for you, yourself, to come and see the remarkable transformation in these kids.

You are unique, Governor, in that you have the power to truly do good in the community simply by visiting a worthwhile program, drawing attention to that program and showcasing its benefits with the many people in our State who care enough to be active in the fight against acts of violence committed by young people.

I am a financial supporter of this program, as is our Kligerman Family Foundation. This is something of true value to the State of New Jersey and is precisely the kind of program that you want to acknowledge as a credit to your administration.

Thank you very much for your attention to this letter and your action.

Very truly yours,



David B. Kligerman  
President / Chief Operating Officer  
AkPharma Inc.

Liza M. Levitt  
North Main Street School  
215 North Main Street  
Pleasantville, NJ 08232

State of New Jersey  
Office of the Governor  
CN-001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Whitman,

I am a teacher of third grade at the North Main Street School in Pleasantville, which is one of the special needs districts in the state. I would like to call your attention to a program called Future Leaders Foundation. It is run by Master Don Straga at his Tang Soo Do Karate Academy. Master Straga is teaching karate to the second and third grades at our school. I have the pleasure of training right alongside my students.

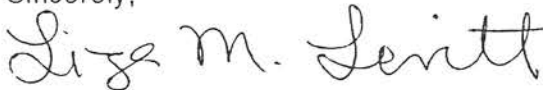
Master Straga stresses the importance of focus, respect, and self-control as tools in both Karate and all aspects of life. In my experience as a teacher, it is the students deficiency in these qualities that is the largest obstacle in both my teaching and their learning. Mastery of these skills would greatly benefit our students for the rest of their lives. I have seen improvement in my students in the short time they have been in the program and look forward to seeing their potential increase as they continue.

Master Straga also fulfills the role of a positive male figure for our students. Many of the children in our school are being raised by mothers or grandmothers and desperately need a male role model in their life. Master Straga is a model not only of the values that he teaches but also of the American Dream of working for yourself while at the same time doing something that you love. He is most certainly someone to be admired and emulated.

Master Straga is dedicated to helping our children through the use of his art. Support of any kind that you could lend to his endeavor would be whole-heartedly appreciated and well deserved.

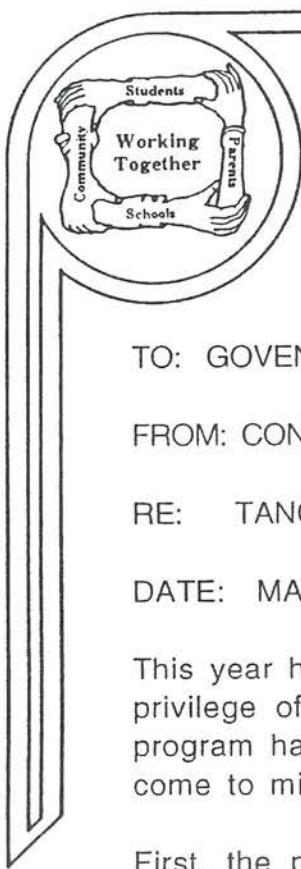
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Liza M. Levitt

MR. KENNETH B. MOORE  
Principal  
383-6889



**PLEASANTVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

NORTH MAIN STREET SCHOOL  
215 NORTH MAIN STREET  
PLEASANTVILLE, N.J. 08232-2102

TO: GOVERNOR, CHRISTINE TODD-WHITMAN

FROM: CONSTANCE L. DAYS

RE: TANG SOO MARTIAL ARTS

DATE: MAY 3, 1999

This year has been the first year that my class has been given the privilege of participating in the martial arts. The Tang Soo Martial Arts program has benefited my students in many ways. There are two which come to mind.

First, the program has provided my students with an opportunity for exposure in the martial arts. Many of my students probably would not have participated in Karate had not the coordinators developed a grant partnership with North Main Street School.

Secondly, the martial arts program has helped my students by emphasizing the importance of self-control and self-reliance. Every child must realize that he or she must answer for their own actions. Often students tend to shift responsibility from themselves on to others. This training has helped my students to develop independence, accept accountability for the choices that they make, and to know that whenever an irresponsible behavior is displayed consequences are expected to follow.

As our children prepare to become future leaders of tomorrow, programs across the country are needed to help steer and guide them in the right direction. I feel that the Tang Soo Martial Arts offers such guidance and that they are making a difference in the lives of many of our children.

Mark Santanello  
North Main Street School  
215 North Main St.  
Pleasantville, N.J. 08232

State of New Jersey  
Office of the Governor  
CN-001  
Trenton, N.J. 08625

Dear Governor Whitman,

I am a second grade teacher at North Main Street School in Pleasantville. My class and I are actively participating in the Future Leaders Foundation program under the instruction of Master Straga at Tang Soo Do Karate Academy.

Many of my students, including myself, are always excited about going to class. Master Straga's instruction is strict yet sincere. This style has started a friendship between Master Straga, the students and myself that is based on trust, respect and care. Master Straga constantly reminds the students about these values and asks that they try to incorporate them into their daily lives as much as possible.

I have seen a great change in many of my students in both their academics as well as social behavior. I honestly feel that this program has a great value in helping the students to work through problems, solve conflicts peacefully and show respect to one another. It is a pleasure to participate in the program, but the greatest pleasure is watching my students take interest in the program and apply it to their lives. I am looking forward to continuing in the program with my students in the years to come. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

  
Mark Santanello

North Main St. School  
215 North Main St.  
Pleasantville, NJ 08232

May 3, 1999

Governor,  
Christie Whitman,  
Trenton, NJ

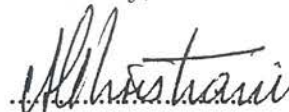
Dear Governor Whitman:

I would like to make you aware of the success of the "Future Leaders" Karate program which Master Straga started in the Pleasantville Public School system.

The children have shown great improvement since the implementation of this program. It has helped to develop them, not only physically, but also emotionally, mentally, and socially. This has resulted in a decrease in behavior problems and better test scores.

The "Future Leaders" program is playing a tremendous role in helping to prepare our children to be great achievers in the new millenium.

Yours truly,



Annie Christiani  
Teacher



Brandy Neunson  
125 Lee Drive  
Manahawkin, NJ 08050

Governor Christie Todd Whitman  
State Government  
Trenton, NJ 08610

Dear Governor Whitman:

I am writing to you to let you know about a wonderful program happening in one of New Jersey's Abbott districts. I am a third grade teacher in the Pleasantville School District at North Main Street School. On Mondays and Wednesdays, my third graders change into karate uniforms and take Tang Soo Do. Not only are the children exercising but they are learning self-control, respect for themselves and others, and the history of Tang Soo Do. All of the children are given uniforms, patches, and belts free of charge. My students have gone from a white belt to yellow belt, soon they will be testing again. The confidence that is growing in my children is amazing. They feel good about themselves when they accomplish something in karate. This carries over in their desire to do better in school. This program is invaluable to our children.

Sincerely,



Brandy Neunson

**Deborah A. Collins-Rice  
Third Grade Teacher  
North Main Street School  
Pleasantville, N.J. 08232**

Dear Governor Whitman,

As of September 1998 my third grade class has participated in a karate class during their regular day. I wondered what differences I might see in my students with such a discipline. In the beginning there was no noticeable change in their behavior. As the year progressed I have seen some real change. As the students walk to class they are much more disciplined and orderly. There even has been some answering with "yes ma'am" which has really surprised me. This is a good opportunity for these students to learn self discipline and self control. And it also teaches them self respect. I hope you take the time to look at this program and evaluate it earnestly.

Thank you  
Deborah A. Collins-Rice

*Deborah A. Collins-Rice*

REGIONAL ACCLAMATION OF TANG SOO DO TRAINING

Parents and students of the Pleasantville Tang Soo Do Karate Academy under the direction of Master Donald Straga give testimony to the positive force of martial arts training:

"Before I started karate, I had horrible balance. I was overweight and getting teased for it. I was not able to defend myself. I was not at all agile. I had very little self confidence. (As a result of Tang Soo Do training) I became stronger mentally by gaining more self confidence. Meditation has helped me relax and gain inner peace. I am now aware of my physical abilities and limitations. My temper is now under control. I realize that whatever handicaps I was born with, I can now deal with and control. I truly believe that all of this happened because of the Christmas gift my parents gave me four years ago. Karate training has now become a way of life for me."

Matt Silva, 16 year old student  
Candidate for Black Belt

"The mental and spiritual strength that I have been taught have helped me with all aspects of my life."

Marc LaGuardia, Businessman  
Red Belt

"Tang Soo Do has increased my childrens' concentration and confidence level. Their teachers always say how polite my son and daughter are."

Pat Stark, mother and student  
Red Belt

"One benefit of Tang Soo Do for my family and myself is the ability to engage in the activity together and focus on a common goal. The clear goal oriented approach to Master Straga's teaching methods produces clear positive results through hard work."

Rick Wehrhan, father of student &  
husband of high ranking Black Belt  
Candidate for Black Belt

"My three sons (Black Belts) have developed healthy bodies, great self confidence, good discipline, good awareness, and excellent study habits. I've had many positive comments from their teachers."

Meri Wagner, mother of students  
Candidate for Black Belt



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Future Leaders Foundation  
401 North Main Street, Pleasantville, NJ 08232  
Phone (609) 646-8855 Fax (609) 646-8991  
futrleader@aol.com www.futureleader.org

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