



Shriners

NEWS & NOTES

Young Shriners Hospital Patient Is A Fierce Competitor

(NAPSA)—Fiercely pushing the buttons on his Nintendo Game Boy, Tony Sabatino had to conquer his latest quest, the action game *The Legend of Zelda*. There was no second thought—he was not going to stop until he had won.

Born with arthrogryposis multiplex congenita (a limitation in the range of motion of a joint), Tony, a Philadelphia Shriners Hospital for Children patient, has won many battles. At age 11, he has had more surgeries than birthdays. He is a young warrior—so determined that he has already earned his black belt in tae kwon do.

"I became interested in tae kwon do after watching *Power Rangers*," Tony said. "Power Ranger Red was my favorite." That was over six years ago. He went on to become a fan of *Walker, Texas Ranger*. And now he enjoys learning new forms, combinations of blocks, punches and kicks, and he can even break three wooden boards with a sidekick.

An avid Pokemon collector, Tony enjoys competing in tae kwon do tournaments. "He is such a competitor," said his dad, David. "He only wants a trophy if he earns it. He once pulled out of a tournament for disabled kids when he found out that he would be the only person competing in his bracket. He went on to compete against able-bodied kids."

Recently at the hospital, fellow members and instructors from the Altoona Academy of Tae Kwon Do put on a martial arts exhibition. Patients, families and staff had



Tony Sabatino is surrounded by instructors and fellow tae kwon do students after a martial arts exhibition at the Philadelphia Shriners Hospital.

the chance to see Academy members break boards and show their moves. As a result of recent foot surgery, Tony was in uniform but had to hold off on showing his skills. After his next foot surgery he will learn the use of martial arts weapons. Until then, he will use his moves on his Game Boy.

For more information on Shriners' network of 22 hospitals that provide medical care and services totally free of charge to children with orthopaedic problems, burns and spinal cord injuries, write to: Shriners International Headquarters, Public Relations Dept., 2900 Rocky Point Dr., Tampa, FL 33607, or visit the Web site at www.shrinershq.org. Treatment is provided to children under age 18 without regard to race, religion or relationship to a Shriner.

If you know a child Shriners can help, call 1-800-237-5055 in the United States or 1-800-361-7256 in Canada.