

## Memories of Table Decoration Competition at the 2010 TKFI Christmas Party

By Students of the Medford Karate and Self Defense dojo

For the 2010 TKFI Christmas Party and Awards Banquet, our dojo was assigned two tables to decorate in the Table Decoration Competition. A team of 6 students took charge of the project and worked with minimal guidance and supervision from me and Sempai Sam. The only instructions they were given was, using the holiday season as the main theme, they were to decorate the tables with colors, animation, creativity and good workmanship. In addition, they were to work together as a team to complete the projects while learning to communicate and collaborate towards a common goal. Below are thoughts shared by the team members on the project – Introduction by Ceci Cheung Shihan.

“The Christmas party Table Decoration Competition was a competition between the karate dojo students of hombu dojo and Medford Karate and Self Defense dojo. The best part of this was that we all got to be in a team and hopefully we would have a terrific table that was good enough to win. The more people we had in a team the more creativity was put into the project. In our team there were Tonya Ellis, Alex Ruppe, Kongphop Krataikaew, Herolyn Nashon, Isaac Manual and I. I was voted to be the team leader and I was to make decisions on ideas and assigned jobs for everyone. We also had some help from Sempai Sam Manual and Sensei Ceci Cheung. Our team usually got together after every practice, put our ideas together on paper and chose tasks for each one of us. Alex, Kongphop and Isaac came up with the idea of the gingerbread house, so they got the parts of the house and Tonya brought the supplies. Then we decided to get together at Kongphop’s house the night before the party to put all the planning into action. This was the most fun part and we all helped build a delicious gingerbread house with decorations. Some of us had a difficult time staying away from the candies....huhum Alex!.... Coming up with an idea for a second table was difficult. Since it was Christmas we decided to make a scene with a Christmas tree, gifts and a train set to go around it. I really appreciated Tonya for bringing the train set. Surprisingly this table took second place in the competition. The judges were the Shihan Kai members. I enjoyed this project because we got to see the final outcome of our hard work. Also, we liked seeing all the other tables made by students of the hombu dojo. I enjoyed teaming up with my fellow karateka to worked together and got to know them better” – by Ida Manual



“First of all, I would like to thank the Lord for giving his only son to all the people on earth. Well, the Christmas party was so much fun. But before the party we worked together as a team at Kongphop’s house to make a gingerbread house for the table decoration contest. The funny part was that we put up the roof first before the walls. So when we were going to decorate the side it was very difficult to do. Another thing was that some of us had a hard time avoiding eating the candies for decorating the gingerbread house. When we got to the party, there were a lot of people much more than I thought. It was fun meeting other people especially the Shihans. Also it was nice to see Sempai Matt again. Before I went up to the front with my team to sing Christmas songs I didn’t think I would be nervous. But then when I was in front of everybody I started to feel butterflies in my stomach. But then we sang and it was all fun. That was the best party I went to for this Christmas. The Christmas table decoration was a good experience because we learned to work as a team and put our ideas together. I would like to do the same thing again next year” – by Herolyn Nashon

“The Christmas party was really awesome. It was awesome because we got to sing ‘Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly’. It was fun when Ida, Herolyn and Tonya sang ‘Jingle Bells’. I really liked it when my dad sang ‘Blue Bijou’ with Soke’s wife Ida. At the party there were lots of table decorations, and I liked Emmet’s collection of bionic karate people. Also, I liked seeing everyone, I liked the magic show a lot, I liked the dance show, the video that Soke made was really cool, and I really liked the food. It was nice to bring gifts for exchange with the other students. I was really glad to see the students at Grants Pass dojo getting the awards. They were very good. The most fun thing was that I got to help with decorating two tables for the Christmas Table Decoration Competition” – Isaac Manual.

“The thing that I like about the Christmas table decoration project was having everyone over to my house to make a ginger bread house for decorating our table. I liked it because everyone got to work together and had fun at the same time. Everyone was laughing and having a good time decorating the gingerbread house. The most difficult part about the Christmas table decoration was coming up with ideas for the decoration to make it look nice and presentable. I think another difficult thing was trying to get the gingerbread house to stay together so it wouldn't fall apart and break because the frosting was the 'glue' and it took a little while for it to harden and hold. Also for the gingerbread house to stay together we could only put a certain amount of decoration and frosting on it but if we put too much decorations, it would be too heavy the roof would slide down. The most enjoyable part about the table decoration assignment was working together as a team and having a good time. I also liked the fact that everybody was good at something so that we all helped built the house. For example, Ida, Herolyn, and Tonya were good at decorations, Alex was good at applying frostings, and I was good at making the frostings. Well Isaac.....he was good at watching TV leaving us alone to work. So we all worked together on a project that we liked. We hoped to do it again in the future.” – Kongphop Krataikaew

“The Christmas table decoration was fun and went fairly well, it seemed that most everyone had a good time and we managed to finish two decoration projects with plenty

of time to spare. I most enjoyed building the gingerbread house, as it not only was my original idea, but because I could not have enjoyed more in building something out of candy. This made a good deal of sense as not only was the end result aesthetically pleasing (at least to me) but it was also quite delicious, and of course, during the construction plenty of “sampling” occurred. Though just to be clear I did not simply enjoy the candy but served as the ‘glue’ person, serving up the packaged (and edible, though not particularly delectable) glue from the kit that Tanya had thoughtfully provided. This part of the task was not as easy as it sound, especially after the roof was loaded (by which I mean completely covered) with candy by the stalwart candy decorators Herolyn, Tonya and Ida, and the roof started to slide down. Kongphop had to make some more glue to keep up, as well as adding hidden structural supports (like a cardboard box on the inside). Besides working on maintaining the structural integrity of a house made of gingerbread, I helped Kongphop with making the second table decoration of a Christmas scene. My job was wrapping decorative presents from packets of various food and empty boxes. This task was probably the most difficult in terms of artistic sense, and I was relegated to finding and cutting boxes and letting Kongphop wrap them as he was much better at it then I was. Fortunately I did not have many boxes to cut as my first attempt ended up with a top edge that gradually declined as it went around the cut line to about two inches below the starting point. Thankfully though with some clever trimming it managed to work and was dutifully wrapped finalizing the second table decoration. With all the work that went into the decorations they could not have helped but look wonderful to their decorators. However, regardless of how they appeared or were judged, the real value of the decoration projects consisted in the fun of working together as a team.” – Alex Ruppe

"I started off with the most difficult part of the table decoration project, which was to get started. Trying to decide what theme we want to go with and who is going to be assigned which task was difficult. Once we had some ideas going, we decided on a gingerbread house and then organized who would do what. We came together on what was needed and tasks were assigned. I think the most fun and enjoyable part of this was coming together with everyone to make the gingerbread house at Kongphop's home. It was nice being able to spend time with the kids outside of karate to interact with them in a different way. I liked being able to find out more about the kids, especially when Kongphop's mother had shown us a picture of him when he was young which was very cute. I knew it embarrassed Kongphop, but I thought it was nice of his mother to share things like that with us. She is very proud of her son. It was great to see our team pulled together and tried different things when we were building the house. I learned a few things as well, Kongphop made very good frosting used as the ‘glue’ for the walls and roof, and that I should not try to put frosting on because Alex was the specialist in that area. Ida, Herolyn and I put candies on the house, trying to get it on the house before the boys could eat the candies. Even when the roof decided to slide off that did not deter us from our task. We started again just as in karate when something didn't go just right, you kept trying until you got it right. All together it was good to work with everyone towards a common goal and have fun doing it. As a result of good teamwork, at the last minute we were assigned an additional table to decorate which we did fairly easily. It was interesting that the table that took the least amount of

effort was the one that received the second place award. Either way we showed good teamwork, good spirit, and had fun.” - Tonya Ellis

