

WEST UNIVERSITY Essentials

Monthly Community Magazine

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West U Parks Plan For the Future

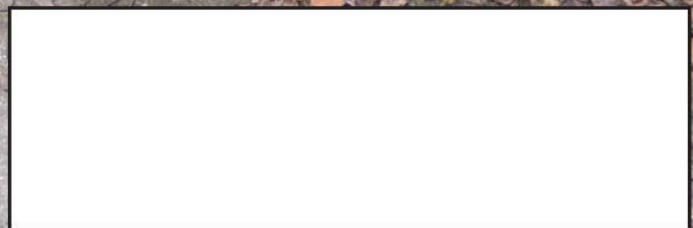
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Chris Cander with
her daughter Sasha.
Photo by Larry
Pullen.

West U Mom is a **Writer and a Fighter**

By Jill Patir



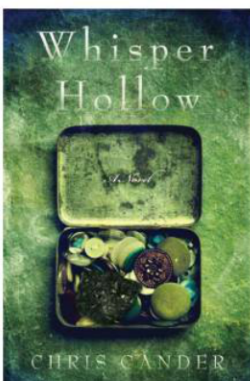
Chris Cander being congratulated for earning her second dan by Grandmaster Mark Giambi, 9th dan, owner of Young Brothers Tae Kwon Do. Photo by Larry Pullen.

West University resident Chris Cander brings a whole new meaning to the phrase, “looks are deceiving.” The petite mother of two appears to be your typical 45-year-old woman, albeit being in exceptional shape. By looking at her, you would never know that you’re in the presence of a second-degree black belt and certified Women’s Tactical Self-Defense Instructor.

When she was only 18 years-old and studying abroad in Spain, Chris was the victim of a brutal kidnapping. She fought her way to survival and learned how important it is for women to have some sort of training for these types of situations. It wasn’t until much later and after her kids were grown that she found time to devote to practicing Martial Arts and realized how obvious it was that this was a skillset necessary to share. She has taught groups of girls as young as Brownies, and is constantly reminding her 12 year-old daughter the importance of being aware and making a plan. Her intent is not to scare anyone, but rather to teach simple tactics and small changes that could be life altering. She indicated that it’s not a matter of living scared, but rather living smart.

She has been practicing Martial Arts for almost seven years and teaches a self-defense class solely reserved for women. Cander feels strongly that men not take part in the class, so that the women can feel completely aware, attentive, comfort-

able and vulnerable. In fact, she spends about half of the class talking about the importance of having heightened awareness and the second half teaching basic skills that can help to fight off an attacker. With a sense of conviction in her voice, Cander said there were at least 9 cases of rape and 4 cases of assault reported in the area, and a total of 1050 reported in Harris County. She compares the training to an insurance policy. You pay a premium up front and hope you never have to use it. If you find yourself in a situation when you do need the insurance, you’re pretty ecstatic it’s there. There’s also a great deal of empowerment that comes along with knowing you can defend yourself, and knowledge is pow-



Award-winning author Chris Cander's most recent novel, *Whisper Hollow*, will be available March 2015.

er. She also recognized, with a smile on her face, that attending her two-hour class will not turn anyone into a ninja. However, it is her hope that the female participants walk away with two important ideas in mind: knowing the importance of a heightened sense of awareness, and to keep your *WITS* (Whatever It Takes to stay Safe) about you. She is in the process of creating a six-week class to take place at Young Brothers Tae Kwon Do starting in January that will help women to sharpen these skills. If you are unable to attend any of her classes, or any similar classes, Chris recommends the book *The Gift of Fear*, by Gavin DeBecker, which discusses how attacks happen and ways to change your mentality to help avoid making yourself a victim.

In addition to being a second-degree black belt, a Krav Maga Certified Women’s Tactical Self-Defense Instructor, a previous body builder, an involved mother to a daughter and 9-year old son, Chris Cander is actually an award-winning author, as well. Her most recent novel, *Whisper Hollow*, will be available March 2015. 📖



Chris Cander demonstrating a turning kick in stilettos. Photo by Simon Gentry.