

# Archbishop Spalding senior to receive national service award

**By Elizabeth Lowe**

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SEVERN - Taylor Michie plans to major in international relations in college, which is fitting for the 17-year-old whose service work extends beyond U.S. borders.

After writing and self-publishing a book in middle school, Michie, now a senior at Archbishop Spalding High School, decided to plant trees as a way to offset the trees cut down for printing. He partnered with a Delaware-based company that encourages readers to plant one tree for every book they read.

Since 2009, Michie has donated \$250 from his book sales which has paid for the planting of 250 trees in Central America. His international service work is being recognized nationally.

He is one of 102 state honorees - one of two from Maryland - to receive the 2013 Prudential Spirit of Community Award, a national award that recognizes youths for volunteerism.

Every year, the top high school and middle youth volunteers in each state and Washington, D.C. are selected as state honorees. Each recipient receives \$1,000, an engraved silver medallion and a trip to Washington, D.C. May 4-7.

Michie said the award is validating, particularly so close to Earth Day, which is April 22.

"A difference really is being made," said Michie, who estimates he has logged about 500 service hours, far surpassing Archbishop Spalding's 60 hour requirement.

A parishioner of St. Mary in Annapolis, Michie also volunteers at church. His service includes helping out at a week-long summer camp.

"The reason we nominated him was because we knew the work that he did came solely from him," said Lewis Van Wambeke, principal of Archbishop Spalding who was involved in nominating Michie for the award. "This particular award is really looking for those people who really have taken the initiative."

Michie wrote "Racing Winds," a 108-page novel loosely based off the Volvo Ocean Race, a distinguished global yacht race.

Book sales have "tapered off," Michie said, "but the commitment still stands."

“I’ll probably develop a new campaign for tree planting,” he said. “It makes me feel like I’m doing something important and something that will have lasting benefits. I’m giving back what I’m taking away.”

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