

# Chronic disease hasn't held back Spalding 'hero'



**By Maria Wiering**

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Tim Murphy Jr. doesn't like to toot his own horn. Life has taught him to be humble, said the Archbishop Spalding High School 2014 graduate.

Spalding's president, Kathleen Mahar, however, is happy to boast.

"If I had to go back and think, 'Who's a hero for the class of 2014,' Tim would be way up there for me," she said.

The 18-year-old was diagnosed as a toddler with cystic fibrosis, a genetic and potentially fatal disease that affects the lungs and digestive system.

Murphy said his case is not as severe as others, but contracting influenza still landed him in the hospital for observation for 10 days before Christmas 2013. It was scary, he said, but his school rallied around him in prayer. Friends visited, and the Severna Park school's staff members waived assignments. He was discharged Christmas Eve. Most of the time, cystic fibrosis is only an asterisk in his day-to-day life.

Murphy manages symptoms daily with about 30 pills, 40 minutes of physical therapy and four nebulizer treatments, but he doesn't feel like it stifled his participation in the Spalding community.

"I don't really want to think I have a disease," he said. "It's just there. I deal with it. I can do whatever all my friends want to do."

He played lacrosse all four years and football for one. He was also involved in service outreaches, including adaptive lacrosse for players with disabilities, and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's annual walk in Annapolis. He also participated in a local summer outreach to inner-city kids from Camden, N.J., that deepened his sense of gratitude for what he has.

When Murphy arrived at Spalding, he was shy and intimidated by a school significantly larger than his elementary school. He grew in confidence during high school and feels prepared for East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C., where he will begin college in the fall.

Murphy shuns the word "courageous" to describe the way he approaches his disease, but Mahar does not.

"He doesn't give himself as much credit as we would," she said.

Murphy describes Spalding, where he earned a 3.2 GPA, as a “good family,” he said. He is also encouraged by the fact that his school helped him in his time of need. “I’m grateful knowing they’ll always have my back,” he said.

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