

# Graduation profile: Mount Carmel graduate speaks volumes - and not just in English

ESSEX - Some teens waste time on video games. Not Andrew Martini, who has used them to further his interest in foreign culture and language.

Those talents were evident at Our Lady of Mount Carmel School's second annual International Day in April, when the music backing Martini malfunctioned but he nonetheless nailed his song selection - in Chinese.

Martini traces that ad lib to his affinity for "Age of Wushu," a 3D martial arts game developed in China. He'll study Japanese at the Essex campus of the Community College of Baltimore County, albeit with an eye on turning his interest in nanotechnology into a career in medical research.

"I like to make things with my own hands," the 18-year-old said.

That ranges from making beef bourguignon using Julia Child's recipe to designing Halloween costumes.

Martini was the school's only regular participant in Streets of Hope, a homeless shelter for men in Southeast Baltimore County. He was a member of the National Honor Society, testament to his determination and Our Lady of Mount Carmel's U.S.S. STAR program, which serves students, such as Martini, with documented learning disabilities.

"His success is due to the (STAR) program and the school. Mr. Ashby had his back throughout his years there," said Martini's mother, Judy, of principal Christopher Ashby.

His home environment is just as enlightened. Both of Martini's parents hold master's degrees. His mother and brother, Christopher, teach in the Baltimore County system, the former in special education.

Martini was raised in St. Luke Parish in Edgemere. His support system includes his maternal grandmother, Joan Griebel, a parishioner of Our Lady of Hope in Dundalk who supplied his ride home from Our Lady of Hope/St. Luke School.

“Maybe I value education a little more,” said Martini, who, like his brother, was adopted. “That definitely goes back to my parents.”

Inspiration is a two-way street, as Martini stood alongside his father, David, when he came into full communion with the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.

“It was nice to see him become Catholic,” Martini said. “Communion meant a little bit more, since I was his sponsor.”