

Passion for justice - Buckeystown graduate pursues career in immigration law



By Maria Wiering

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BUCKEYSTOWN - Austin Rose, 18, wants to be an immigration lawyer, and he has a good idea of what that entails.

At the end of his junior year at St. John's Catholic Prep, he began to help his father, Scott Rose, an attorney who does pro bono work on immigration cases. He turned his interest into an internship for the Esperanza Center in Baltimore, a Catholic Charities program that assists immigrants, including those who are in the country illegally.

"My whole life I've been pretty social justice oriented," he said, pointing to the influence of his parents, older sister, and grandfather, Deacon Alan Rose, who is retired in Baltimore City. His school, which has Jesuit roots, also encourages students to serve the community.

Rose coordinated with school administrators to use a regular class period for the internship, which focused on youths hoping to gain Special Immigrant Juveniles Status (SIJS) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Eligible youths are unaccompanied and have been abused, abandoned or neglected.

At first, Rose focused on paperwork, including drafting pleadings, but his role expanded to working directly with clients and preparing them for court hearings. Most were from El Salvador.

Rose's political views on immigration compelled him to get involved, but his internship put a human face on public policy, he said.

"Until you see what these people go through and what their experiences are, you can never really understand," he said. "Every person I've worked with has been a remarkable person."

The case work deepened Rose's interest in law and bolstered his Spanish, which he studied at St. John's Catholic Prep.

Adonia Simpson, managing attorney for Esperanza's Immigration Legal Services,

said Rose's skills rival those of law school interns. She was most impressed by the way he was able to relate with the clients, many of whom are close to his age.

In February, Rose accompanied a client-turned-friend, Williams Guevara, to testify before Maryland legislators as part of a successful effort to raise the age of eligibility for SIJS in Maryland from 18 to 21.

Rose plans to attend Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., to study government and Spanish with an eye to law school and a future in public interest law.

"D.C. is the perfect location for me in terms of law, internships and being interested in politics," he said. "It's the center of immigration law."

While at St. John's, Rose also participated in mock trial and National Honor Society, played tennis and was captain of the varsity soccer team, with a 4.3 GPA.

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