

2009 GWENDOLYN REESE SPRIT OF CHALLENGE AWARD

On March 12, 2009, the Brophy Mothers' Guild held a special luncheon, at which it recognized an exceptional student, chosen by the administration and counselors to receive the coveted 'Gwendolyn Reese Spirit of Challenge Award.' The award, named in honor of Father Reese's mother, is presented annually, to a student in his senior year, who faces life's challenges with grace, courage, perseverance, and determination. This year's recipient is Gabriel Castellanos, who is the personification of these attributes. His story is unforgettable and inspirational.

Three years ago Gabe suffered, for the first time ever, a diabetic attack which hospitalized him for four months and left him completely blind. If that was not enough, several months later, Gabe broke his hip and as a result underwent four surgeries and a hip replacement. Throughout this ordeal, Gabe, with the support of his family, the faculty and staff at Brophy, and his two close friends Tim Olinski and Sam Martin, he continued his schooling at Brophy. A plan was developed that would become the pathway to Gabe's graduation with his class in May 2009. Brophy was supportive and provided accommodations. Gabe has always rewarded them with his hard work and commitment to excellence that has resulted in the success of his high school experience.

The rest is history. Gabe has achieved an academic record nothing short of spectacular! He will graduate with a cumulative GPA of just over 4.0! Gabe is a positive young man who chooses not to dwell on the past but to look ahead and move forward. He is an inspiration and a genuine role model for others who have met life's serious challenges. He has taught himself to play the guitar and he composes music. Gabe is also learning to play the piano.

Gabe plans to attend Ganzaga University, a Jesuit school in Washington because, he says, 'Jesuits allow you the freedom to find your own way.' He hopes to become a software engineer. His goal - to create adaptive technology that will make the world more accessible to persons with disabilities.

Gabe has faced life's challenges, big and small, with the courage and strength that comes from LOVE: his love of God; his love of himself; his love of his family, friends, school and community. The Brophy Mothers' Guild salutes Gabriel Castellanos and wishes him every future success!

Lisa Khnanisho
1st Vice President
Brophy Mothers' Guild