

Congratulations, Michael Lohrer!

Michael Lohrer (center, pictured with GCHS Principal, Nanine McLaughlin and Mrs. Katherine Squires) has been chosen as one of this year's recipients of the 2016 Yes I Can Awards!

The **Yes I Can Awards** honor children and youth with disabilities who are role models for others and have excelled in a specific area. Each year, the program receives hundreds of applicants throughout the country who are nominated in various categories. Michael's teacher, Mrs. Katherine Squires, nominated Michael in the category of Academics. The process consisted of filling out an application and writing a short essay about why she considered Michael deserving of such an award. The application also needed to include an artifact. For their artifact, Michael made a short video explaining why he works so hard in school, his many accomplishments (for example, passing the Regents Exams!) and giving some advice to other students.

Here is short blurb from the nomination application submitted by Mrs. Squires on Michael's behalf:

"In my United States History and Government class last year Michael spent the entire year preparing for the exam and passed with a 77. During the last school year he took every single practice U.S. History Regents that was available to him, totaling to 50 practice exams, all done on his own free time. Michael and his parents did this entirely on their own without my help or guidance. In fact, his mom would often comment how Michael would be the one who had to remind her that they needed to study together or to make sure she would be home to help him. Prior to each classroom test Michael would seek me out for extra review work and would often take home classroom games, materials or make his own assignments. There are not many students who could uphold this incredible work ethic for five years of high school, especially a student who struggles with school as much as Michael. Due to his disabilities, Michael struggles with all types of academic work, especially reading and writing. Yet his struggles have never got in the way of his academic success. Teaching him for three years I have never once heard the words 'I can't.' If Michael does not understand something he simply puts more work in."

Michael and his family will now travel to St. Louis this April to celebrate his accomplishments. His story will be featured on the **Council of Exceptional Children website** and he may be asked to share his story in person.

As Mrs. Squires put it, "Michael is the most hardworking student I have ever met and I am so excited for him!" GC SEPTA cannot help but agree with her sentiment! Way to go, Michael!