



Contact: Lori Galván
Phone: 619.522.4050 x 3
Email: Lori.Galvan@coronado.k12.ca.us

For Immediate Release

CoSA Senior Michael Silberblatt Wins Presidential Scholar Award

Of 3 million graduating seniors nationally, 141 earn prestigious honor

Coronado, CA, May 6, 2010 – Michael Silberblatt has been named a 2010 U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts. Michael is one of 141 outstanding American high school seniors who have demonstrated exceptional achievement at school and in their community.

The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars selects the scholars based on their academic success, artistic excellence, essays, school evaluations and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership and demonstrated commitment to high ideals. Michael and the other winners will be honored for their accomplishments June 19-22 during a national recognition week in Washington, D.C.

Presidential Scholars are represented by one male and female student from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico plus 20 students who represent the arts and Americans living abroad plus others who are chosen at-large. Michael is among the 20 outstanding artists who have been selected for the honor.

Last fall, Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA) seniors in the theatre department each recorded a video audition to enter the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA) contest. Michael entered in the Spoken Theatre category and won a finalist position. In January, Michael joined 149 other YoungArts finalists in Miami who attended workshops and competed for scholarships. Michael won a YoungArts silver award, for which he received \$5,000 and an all-expense paid trip to New York City for an arts week with 50 other YoungArts winners. He was recently selected by his YoungArts classmates to serve as the 2010 Class Representative for the YoungArts Alumni Association. From this group, he was among 20 selected as presidential scholars and receives honors that include dinner in the White House.

Each scholar was also given the opportunity to invite his or her most inspiring and challenging teacher to travel to Washington to receive a Teacher Recognition Award from the U.S. Department of Education. The application process for the presidential scholar awards rivals that of demanding college applications, but the most difficult part for Michael was selecting just one teacher.

Michael chose Coronado High School and CoSA teacher Linda Benning for this honor. It is a fitting tribute to Benning who is retiring after 30 years from Coronado High School and CoSA this year after teaching English, Drama, Government, and Economics; directing the Oxford Academics-English 12P program; and serving as the full-time librarian.

“Michael is the ideal student and artist. His work ethic is impeccable; his attitude is always positive, and he doesn’t really know how talented he is. His most endearing qualities are his humility and sincerity. He is amazed every time he wins an award,” says Benning. “As a retiring teacher after 30+ years working with students, I can honestly say that “graduating” along with Michael and sharing this special honor with him is a perfect curtain call for my fabulous career.”

"This whole experience with NFAA YoungArts has been nothing short of life-changing. How many people do you know have the opportunity to spend a week each in Miami, New York, and Washington D.C. learning from internationally-renowned artists in master class settings while making friendships and connections that will last a lifetime? I feel so honored and blessed to be a part of the incredible organization that ultimately gave me the confidence to pursue a career in the arts," describes an overwhelmed Michael.

Michael is the son of Lori and Enrique Silberblatt. His father is a physician in Roanoke, VA, and his mother is a surgical registered nurse at Balboa Naval Medical Center. He lives with his mother in Coronado. Michael will be attending Northwestern University this fall.

Everyone at CHS and CoSA are beaming with pride over Michael’s award. He is the first student at the school to receive a presidential scholar award. Last week, the marquee at CHS displayed congratulations to Michael as he closed his last musical at CoSA, *Hello, Dolly!*. If you missed it, don’t worry. We are sure there will be many more times his name will be up in lights in the future.

About Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA)

CoSA is a public arts conservatory for high school students that embraces and encourages artistic creativity and academic excellence. This pre-professional arts program reaches out to talented students from all over San Diego County and offers a nurturing environment focused on individual growth, opportunity, and diversity.

CoSA is made possible by Coronado School of the Arts Foundation, a non-profit tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation whose stakeholders are passionate about supporting Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA), improving community awareness of CoSA, and securing funds to perpetuate, improve and expand the school’s programs. For more information on CoSA or the Foundation, call 619.522.4050 or visit www.cosafoundation.org.

###