

2013 Young Man of the Year



2013 Young Man of the Year: Jon Hochstein

Virginia State Program Chairman Mike Gaspers provided the following introduction of the Virginia Knights of Columbus Young Man of the Year at the annual Awards Brunch at the 113th state convention:

This year's Young Man of the Year is an outstanding student. A senior in High School, he is an AP Scholar, ranked 27th in his class of 421 and carries a 4.3 GPA. He has been awarded the Harvard Club of Washington Book Award and was the 2011-2012 Chemistry Student of the Year and has received a full scholarship to college where he intends to study biomedical engineering.

He has been a member of the National Honor Society since the fall of 2011, serving as Vice-President this year, managing a tutoring program of 150 tutors who work with 300 students, while reading to elementary school students one day a week. He has played piano in the Jazz Band for three years, and was a member of his high school football and baseball teams playing cornerback and starting second baseman.

When not in school, our young man has been an assistant coach for a 5th grade boys' basketball team in the local public league, a flag football referee and a coach at area basketball clinics. He has been an intern at Child Cardiology Associates and Ashburn Animal Hospital, and works 15 hours a week at The Piano Express with group piano lessons.

At his parish, he serves as an usher and altar server. With his mom, dad and his younger brother, our young man serves the Divine Mercy Outreach Ministry with their annual coat drive collecting over 1200 coats in the past two years at the annual Merciful Harvest, and the year round delivery of furniture and goods to the needy in the area. He has also volunteered in the Leadership Training Program, Cold Weather Shelter and Habitat for Humanity. Where does he find the time?

This young man has participated on the Organ Donation Awareness float in the Cherry Blossom Parade, won three gold medals in the 2011 Virginia Transplant Games and one gold and three silver medals in the 2010 National

Transplant Games. He has also served on the Washington Regional Transplant Community since 2010 as a speaker and hospital ambassador at high schools, forums and conferences. Now you may be asking, why am I mentioning his involvement with organ donation and transplants?

When he was just under 4 years old, he told his mom "it's hard work to climb up stairs". He was ill, lethargic and certainly not acting like a normal 4 year old. After a number of visits to a variety of doctors, he was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. He was placed on the organ wait list, but soon his condition worsened to the point where he was not expected to survive the night. But God had plans for our young man! Another family facing the loss of their child made the selfless decision to donate their child's organs, and our young man received the gift of life. His story does not stop there. Five years later at age 9, he became ill again, but this time it wasn't his heart, but Hodgkin's Lymphoma. After 5 long months of treatment, he was cancer free. He joined the swim team and spent the summer building his body back to normal. When he started 5th grade, he was back, taking eighth place in his class in the mile run.

Everything again returned to normal – for a time. Five weeks later he lost all his energy, only to be told by the doctors that his body was now rejecting his transplanted organ. Back to the hospital, more drugs, more lying in bed, missing half the school year while the doctors tried different medications to control the rejection. Finally, after four months, the rejection stopped and his heart was healthy again.

Although he never met the donor family, our young man of the year honors them by speaking about his success with his organ transplantation, while encouraging others to talk about organ donation. He shares his story and gratitude for a second chance at life, and his goal to become a cardiothoracic surgeon.

It is my great honor and privilege to announce the winner of the 2012-2013 Virginia State Council Young Man of the Year – submitted by Blessed Louis Martin Council 15256 in Ashburn, my hero, Jon Hochstein.

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