

# SHOW & TELL



**H**omeschooler Michael Platt, age 16, of Bowie, MD, has been named a winner of the 2021 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. The Barron Prize annually honors 25 outstanding young leaders ages 8 to 18 who have made a significant positive impact on people, their communities, and the environment. Fifteen top winners each receive \$10,000 to support their service work or higher education.

Michael created his business, Michael's Desserts to use his love of baking to help others. For every sweet treat he sells, he donates one to someone in need. He also founded P.L.L.A.T.E.—Power, Love, Learning, and Access To Everyone—to address food insecurity. Through P.L.L.A.T.E., he has distributed thousands of healthy non-perishable snacks to underserved kids. He ultimately hopes to expand the initiative into a pay-what-you-can grocery store.

Michael also advocates for the need to address hunger, especially in children. He hosts bake sales and baking demonstrations as fundraisers for the national nonprofit No Kid

Hungry. As a GivingTuesday Spark leader, he encourages donations to nonprofits that combat hunger and other needs on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving each year.

Diagnosed with epilepsy at age 9 and advised to cut back his involvement in sports, Michael's grandmother intro-

duced him to a different passion: cooking and baking with her. After delighting family and friends with his creations, at age 11 he was inspired to launch his business, resolving to use it as a way to help others.

Michael started small, baking cupcakes and delivering them to kids at domestic-violence shelters. Since then, he has grown his offerings to include Freedom Fighter Cupcakes, original creations designed each month to honor “the people who inspire us to be better, solve big problems, and change the world.” His cupcakes have honored freedom fighters Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., poet Maya Angelou, and female-education activist Malala Yousafzai, among others.

Michael introduces his monthly cupcakes via video to his 12,000 avid Instagram followers (via @michaelcplatt), explaining each freedom fighter's contribution and how they've inspired him.

We caught up with Michael and his mom, Danita. They were happy to explain their homeschool journey.

Danita told us, “We homeschooled in the beginning. Then my life situa-



*Michael gains inspiration for each cupcake by where the person comes from, their favorite food, or even what they look like. This “Grandpa Kitchen Golden Milk Freedom Fighter Cupcake” is named after the late Indian chef who cooked huge meals for orphans on his popular YouTube channel.*





Michael's table at the Cookies & Cupcakes Bake-off Competition he founded and runs annually. The pictured event was hosted by Cookology, a local cooking school.

Discovery Channel did a segment about it. The cookies and cupcakes were sold and all the proceeds went to the hungry.

tion changed and the boys went to public school. We began homeschooling again in 2017, due to Michael's epilepsy and to his older brother Gabriel needing a more challenging program."

The Platts follow the Charlotte Mason Method in their homeschool. "We cover several subjects a day and our curriculum is literary, including Ambleside Online," Danita says.

The Platt brothers also participate in a Charlotte Mason co-op where they study classics such as Shakespeare and Plutarch's *Lives* and where they participate in Swedish Drills (physical education movements that they do as a group). The boys are also in a second tutoring co-op for subjects such as Biology and Multimedia Design.

Danita told us, "Homeschooling has been a great way to reduce stress for Michael. We saw an immediate reduction in the number of seizures he was having. Also it gave him and his brother the freedom to learn about things that interest them and to begin their social-preneurship advocacy and community work."

Michael agrees. "For me, homeschooling has been a way to follow my own initiative when it comes to learning. Also, it gives me the free time to do other

things," he acknowledged in his soft-spoken way.

When pressed as to what those "other things" might be (aside from his business), we discovered Michael had been on Season 4 of Food Network's Kids Baking Championship, an episode of "Operation Awesome" on BYUtv, and Disney+ "Be Our Chef." Definitely nice to have time for these!

As for future plans: it's no surprise that Michael is looking at culinary schools. Gabriel wants to go straight to working in film, so he's doing internships right now and making short films.

"My dad tells me to do what I love in service to others," says Michael. "That's why I chose to use Michael's Desserts to help people—to support them with their basic needs so they can pursue what they love to do and make a difference with it."

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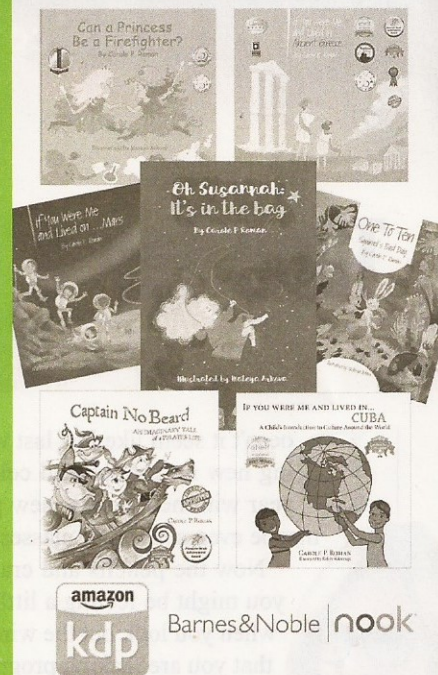
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