

AZ Shining Star: Meet Michael Moorehead

AT FIRST GLANCE, most people think Michael Moorehead, age 15, is special because his children's picture book, *The Student From Zombie Island: Conquering the Rumor Monster* was published when he was only 11. However, if they look deeper, they will better see the driving forces behind his accomplishment – compassion and persistence – are even more impressive.

"I really didn't write the book because I love to write," Michael admits. "I did it to show my teacher, Ms. Lujan, how grateful I was for her help with reading and writing. I was really struggling with it, and she gave me extra attention in class, and that truly helped."

As a token of his appreciation, Michael dedicated his book to Nancy Lujan, his second-grade teacher at Waggoner Elementary School.

"I knew it would mean more to her if I 'showed' her how much she helped rather than just buying her something."

This is where the persistence comes into play. Even after reworking his story several times, Michael's book continued to be rejected by publishers before finally getting picked up by Five Star Publications.

"One publisher even accepted the book, but then held onto it for a year before changing his mind and not publishing it," says Michael. "That was extremely frustrating. My mom told me that it was okay if it didn't get published, but I knew it was good. I knew it would mean a lot to Ms. Lujan to see her name printed in a book by one of her students, so I kept on trying."

So what's next for this rising star? Michael tells Arizona Parenting magazine he has put writing on hold for now. He is concentrating on getting his Eagle Scout designation and finishing high school so he can go to college and become a chemical environmental engineer.

"I love science," says Michael, "and as a chemical environmental engineer, I can help people and the earth." ■



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