

# WTG Achievers

Vol. 9, No. 5

December 2008

## About the WTG

The twenty private, or independent, colleges and universities of Wisconsin operate without taxpayer support, but provide an invaluable public service to the state, educating more than 58,000 students a year. Many of Wisconsin's best and brightest need financial help to attend the college of their choice.

The State of Wisconsin created the Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) in 1965 to help qualified Wisconsin citizens to succeed. Fully one-third of the low-income students who apply for the WTG are turned away every year for lack of funds. Each month WTG Achievers brings you success stories of Wisconsinites for whom the WTG has made a significant difference.

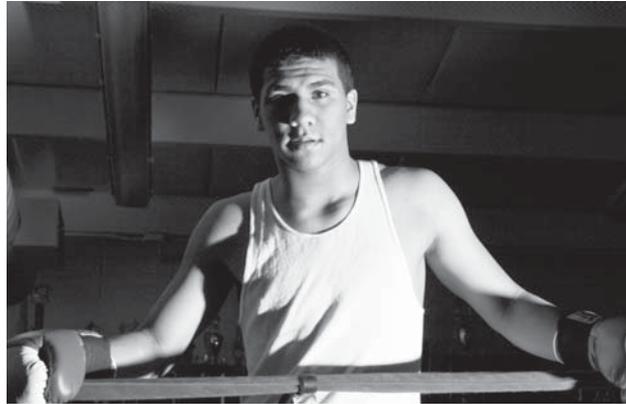
WTG Achievers is published monthly by the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), 122 W. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703-2718; 608-256-7761; mail@waicu.org.

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## Marquette champion packs a punch for WTG

For Luis Arias, a Marquette University freshman and the men's middleweight boxing national amateur champion, life is anything but "normal." However, Luis insists that despite his frequent trips to national and international boxing championships and daily training sessions, he is just like any other Marquette freshman—busy.

His days consist of classes,



Luis Arias of Milwaukee, a freshman at Marquette University

tutoring sessions, and homework, all of which have to be finished before beginning his daily three-hour training sessions with his boxing coach, Israel Acosta. After winning

the national championship, Luis was picked as an alternate for the 2008 Olympic team. He passed on the trip to Beijing, because he wanted to prepare for Marquette.

Luis lived on campus last summer taking a challenging class as part of Marquette's Upward Bound program, which assists low-income and first-generation high school students in their

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Creating community as important as creating art for WTG recipient



Jeffrey Sama of Mequon, a senior at Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design

For artist Jeffrey Sama, creativity goes beyond the soaring, light-filled draw-

ings filling his studio at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design.

"I have a great need to create something; whether it's making kids feel welcome at a community center, making a piece of artwork for myself or the community, or creating meaningful relationships with people in the community."

The Wisconsin Tuition Grant is part of a financial aid package that Jeffrey describes as, "vital to the pursuit of my education at MIAD. The WTG represents opportunity to me and to so many others."

The MIAD senior and Presidential Scholar has been doing all that and more long before his college career ever began. Based on his years of volunteer and summer work, Jeffrey was elected at age 19 as the youngest member of the board of directors at Mequon's Logemann Community Center.

While attending the center's middle-school program, Jeffrey designed its logo. From there he designed the center's brochure and created additional art and community projects, which he continued

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**LUIS ARIAS** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

goal of becoming college graduates.

"I always told myself I would go to Marquette," said Luis. "I just love it here. The campus is beautiful, the people are fun, and it has a great business program, which was important to me." Luis plans to major in business and wants to be a boxing promoter after he hangs up his gloves.

Luis credits Marquette's faculty for supporting both his academic and boxing careers. When Luis found out he would miss two weeks of classes this fall to attend the world championships in Mexico, the faculty worked together to put together an academic plan to keep him on track during the tournament. Luis kept up with his assignments while finishing third in the international event.

Luis' commitment to his education began early. As a child growing up in Milwaukee, Luis played every sport, turning to boxing when he

was deemed "too small" for football. Luis soon learned that school was more important than boxing. His mom banned him from the gym if his grades suffered, so Luis knew he had to excel at school if he wanted to continue winning boxing titles.

"I can't box for the rest of my life," said Luis. "I want to be healthy, have a family, and work with the sport I love. I need a degree to do that."

As part of his financial aid package, Luis received a Wisconsin Tuition Grant which made it possible for him to attend his first-choice school, Marquette University—A step that helps Luis Arias fulfill both his academic and boxing dreams.

**FACT OF THE MONTH**

People with a college degree are the happiest group in the U.S. 41% of those with bachelor's degrees say they are "very happy" compared to only 31% of those whose education ended after high school.

*National Opinion Research Center*

**JEFFREY SAMA** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

after eventually becoming the middle school summer program's supervisor.

"Despite his youth, or perhaps because of it, Jeffrey is a great role model for others on the board," said Joni Monfre, Logemann's program director. He's also become a classic role model for MIAD's college-wide commitment to community service.

Through the required Service Learning Course and Pre-College program, Jeffrey partnered his junior year with Logemann and his alma mater, Homestead High

School, to connect high-school students with cognitively challenged adults.

The project, which far exceeded the course requirements, "drew" on Jeffrey's own desire "to expand his comfort zone and to get people to think about how they interact with others." The student artworks resulting from the interactions were exhibited at Homestead to share the challenges and rewards of communicating with individuals who are disabled.

In addition to community work, the former high school varsity soccer player

also leads MIAD's intramural team, exhibits his work in Milwaukee, and works for Spolar Studios restoring the historic Mansion Hill Inn in Madison.

"I am excited by all the possibilities that await me after graduation" he said, "but know that ultimately, I want to work with kids, and with art in the community. My time at MIAD has developed my skills as an artist, my relationships, and has fueled my long-lasting love for creating both for myself and for others."

**Wisconsin's Private Colleges and Universities**

- Alverno College *Milwaukee*
- Beloit College *Beloit*
- Cardinal Stritch University *Milwaukee*
- Carroll University *Waukesha*
- Carthage College *Kenosha*
- Concordia University *Mequon*
- Edgewood College *Madison*

- Lakeland College *Sheboygan*
- Lawrence University *Appleton*
- Marian University *Fond du Lac*
- Marquette University *Milwaukee*
- Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design *Milwaukee*
- Milwaukee School of Engineering *Milwaukee*

- Mount Mary College *Milwaukee*
- Northland College *Ashland*
- Ripon College *Ripon*
- St. Norbert College *De Pere*
- Silver Lake College *Manitowoc*
- Viterbo University *La Crosse*
- Wisconsin Lutheran College *Milwaukee*

