

East Austin College Prep 8th grader **Michael Alvarez** is having an amazing year. This spring, he flew to **New York City** to accept a gold medal and \$1000 scholarship for a video game he designed—a trip he sandwiched between class visits to **Yellowstone Park** and **Silicon Valley**.

“At first I thought, ‘This can’t be right,’” **Michael** laughs, remembering his reaction to the news that he was to be honored at the **2012 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards** at **Carnegie Hall**, with **Meryl Streep** as the guest speaker. “I immediately went to the internet to check it out.”

Technology is a trusted friend to **Michael** thanks, in no small part, to the **Globaloria** program at **EAPrep** that’s teaching **Michael** and his classmates to create video games from scratch. To put that in perspective, here’s what one **Austin** journalist had to say after attending this year’s **Globey Awards** at **EAPrep**. “I once tried to make a video game. To put the entire experiment on a bumper sticker, it didn’t work out. Coding is hard. And the fact that middle-schoolers were showing off their games, only made me feel worse.”

But, it wasn’t a class project that won **Michael** his awards. “**Michael** is so engaged by the game-making at school, that he made [his winning submission] *Ball World* on his own,” says **Shannon Sullivan**, Vice

President of **World Wide Workshop**, the **New York**-based company that invented the **Globaloria** program. “That’s the kind of planting of the seed that we’re hoping for.”

Ward Tisdale, Director of **Global Community Affairs** for **Austin**-based **AMD**, the company that sponsors the video game category at the **Scholastic Art & Writing Awards**, adds that kids like **Michael** are the reason the company created their **Changing The Game** program which is designed to take gaming beyond entertainment, and inspire youth to learn.

The **AMD Foundation** gives out five awards of \$1,000 each to the top winners in the video game design category, but the company has nothing to do with the judging. Which is good because they also sponsor the **Globaloria** program at **EAPrep**.

According to the website of the **Alliance for Young Artists and Writers in New York City**, which holds the **Scholastic Art & Writing Awards**, submissions are juried by luminaries in the arts. Get a load of some of the past winners of the prestigious 89 year-old contest: **Andy Warhol**, **Sylvia Plath**, **Truman Capote**, **Richard Avedon**, **Robert Redford** and **Joyce Carol Oates**.

East Austin 8th Grader Makes It To Carnegie Hall

Sullivan is careful to stress that all the kids at **EAPrep** are in a special position to dream big. “They’re doing something really unique in having this game-design class, building a set of skills that can rival anyone in the country and probably exceed a lot of them.”

Michael adds that his winning design was the result of continual improvement on something he began working on a year earlier. “Don’t give up even if it gets tough,” he gleans. Words to live by learned young.

BELOW: **Michael Alvarez**, his mother **Antonia Rangel** and **Michael**’s brother in the photo is **Eduardo Rangel**.



ABOVE: Shannon Sullivan, VP of World Wide Workshop with Michael Alvarez



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