



Davidson Fellow
Michael Leap

(\$10,000 Scholarship Recipient)



Personal Info

Michael Leap
Age: 17
Okemos, Michigan

School, College and Career Plans

Michael is a rising senior at East Lansing High School. He hopes to go to law school or become a philosophy professor.

Davidson Fellows Submission (*Philosophy*)

In his project, "The Ontology of Science: A Critical Perspective," Michael tackles one of the largest philosophical debates of our time – the role of science in society. In his portfolio, Michael examines this relationship by synthesizing and applying several complex philosophical concepts to basic questions about science in everyday life. With a unifying thesis that conventional views of science, truth, and nature only function from a self-referential viewpoint, he presents new, transversal perspectives in hopes that this critical examination will lead to a greater understanding of the world at large.

Biography

Michael attended Montessori School through sixth grade and enjoyed the flexible class schedule and emphasis on interest-based learning and working at his own pace. He is a strong advocate for a desire driven education that allows students to experience life.

Michael has always been interested in philosophy although most that captured his attention were very abstract. He was prompted to do his Fellows project as a result of various discussions with his debate coach and mentor. As he began to reconsider the few very basic ways he viewed the world and began to reconsider what it meant to view the world, it became clear that a great many social conventions and common beliefs fell into a new and uncomfortable light. He was moved to investigate further, in order to see what kinds of rigid rationality were acceptable and useful, and which kinds were not.

Michael's main hobbies/interests include: sitting outside and hanging out with big groups of friends, writing poetry, and attending debate tournaments. His favorite kinds of music are rap (Mid West, Dirty South, East Coast, West Coast, old school, and progressive hip hop), really traditional punk music, really weird alternative music, old school industrial, reggae and dancehall, as well as blues, bluegrass, and traditional country.

Please see next page.



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(Cont.)

Honors/Awards

- 2008 Davidson Fellow
- 2008 First Place Speaker East Kentwood Tournament
- 2007-2008 Underclassman Scholarship and Leadership Award (A.P. History)
- 2007-2008 Underclassman Scholarship and Leadership Award (English)
- 2007-2008 East Lansing High School Distinguished Scholar Award
- 2007 2nd Place Speaker Michigan State University Tournament
- 2007 2nd Place Team Okemos Debate Tournament
- 2007 8th Place Speaker Okemos Debate Tournament
- 2007 5th Place Speaker East Grand Rapids Pioneer Classic Tournament
- 2007 1st Place Team MOSSA Tournament
- 2007 3rd Place Speaker MOSSA Tournament
- 2007 Best Up-and-Coming Debater MOSSA Tournament
- 2006-2007 Underclassman Scholarship and Leadership Award (Applied Technology)
- 2006 1st Place Maverick Holt Debate League
- 2006 8th Place Speaker Award Michigan JV Finals
- 2006 3rd Place Team Michigan Varsity Finals
- 2006 3rd Place Speaker Award MOSSA Tournament
- 2006 3rd Place Team MOSSA Tournament
- 2005-2006 Underclassman Scholarship and Leadership Award (Debate)
- 2005-2006 East Lansing High School Distinguished Scholar Award

Community Activities

Michael volunteers at his local public library, putting books in order, coordinating events for kids, and helping with various miscellaneous projects. He was also a member of the Teen Advisory Board at the library and hosted teen poetry night, reviewed new young adult book acquisitions and was a reader for Stories in the Garden. Michael was also a debate instructor at Michigan State University 4-H Exploration Days.

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