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Autism not a deterrent to Midview student

Filed on January 25, 2015 by [Anna Merriman](#)[11 Comments](#)[Tweet](#)

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ELYRIA — Sixteen-year-old Michael Whary is an honors student taking advanced classes, plays the piano and trumpet, and is a member of his school's track team.

And, as Michael readily acknowledges, he's been diagnosed with autism.

The Midview High School student and Boy Scout knows many people in his situation struggle with that diagnosis.

"So many parents can't cope with the diagnosis, and they go into grief," Michael said.

Michael decided to make a video to inspire hope for people diagnosed with autism and their parents.

He made the video last year as his Eagle Scout project for Boy Scout Troop 120 in Elyria.

"(My) hope for the video is so (parents) can get over their grief sooner and seek help," Michael said.

Michael, his parents and students and teachers from the Children's Development Center in Amherst spent nine months working on the video, which they released on Youtube on

Dec. 31. In less than a month, the video has been watched more than 16,000 times.

"I was shocked it went viral," Michael said.

The video, titled "[Autism Awareness — Michael Whary — Eagle Scout Project](#)," delivers a message of hope and inspiration to anyone who has been diagnosed with a form of autism.

In the beginning of the video, Michael acknowledged that people struggle with the diagnosis. "You're not alone," the video stated in white lettering before switching to upbeat music and pictures of Michael in the marching band.

Michael listed his accomplishments as a star student, an athlete and a musician and finished the video with a lip-synch performance of Katy Perry's "Roar," accompanied by friends and students from the Children's Development Center.

Michael said he first got the idea for the video when he met an emergency medical technician during a hospital visit. Michael said the EMT was surprised to learn the teenager was autistic, especially since the EMT's own nephew had just been diagnosed with autism.

"He said I gave him hope for his nephew," Michael said, adding that was the moment he wanted to give hope to more people through the video.

Michael's mother, Judi Whary, said the initial thought of putting her son into the public eye was not easy.

"It was difficult to let him try this," Whary said, adding that she soon realized the project was close to



Michael Whary is an Eagle Scout candidate with Troop 120 in Elyria. PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDI WHARY



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her son's heart. "We thought the message was so important."

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About Anna Merriman

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