

# Two teens honored with prestigious St. Timothy Award

written by Katie Zakrzewski |



Two teens took home the St. Timothy Award during the Catholic Youth Ministry convention April 6.

Every year, the Diocese of Little Rock Youth Ministry Office chooses two teens to receive the prestigious award.

“This year, we had five nominations for our top youth award, the St. Timothy Award,” said Liz Tingquist, director of youth and campus ministries. “This is given to a graduating senior who lives as a disciple of Christ, setting a positive example for other youth; witnesses to his/her faith by exhibiting Catholic morals and integrity; demonstrates Gospel values through service to others and exhibits Christian leadership in parish, school and community settings. This person also shows creativity, initiative, leadership, a desire to serve and has a passion for the faith.”

This year’s winners were Rachel Blair, 18, a parishioner of Christ the King Church in Little Rock, and Abner Sierra, 18, a parishioner of St. John Church in Russellville..

“Trish and I are blessed to know all five of the nominees,” Tingquist said. “They are truly outstanding disciples. We had an independent committee review the nominations, and the committee’s choices were Rachel Blair and Abner Sierra. Rachel has quiet strength and a wonderful prayer and spiritual life. Abner is a respected leader in his youth group, serving with sincere humility.”

Blair, who is homeschooled, attributes her success to her hard work and service, which contributed to her receiving the award.

“I’m in the MOVE (Mission Outreach Evangelization) committee at my CYM. ... I’ve been helping out with that since sophomore year. I really have a love for helping others, and I think that’s what led them to pick me for it, because I volunteered.”

In addition to being involved in her parish and diocesan groups, Blair also spends a lot of time in adoration. This fall, Blair will begin studying nuclear medicine at the University of Central Arkansas.

“My faith is definitely what’s led me to be here,” she said. “I’ve relied on it so much through all the struggles in my life, and it’s what’s gotten me through school and everything. So I’m definitely hoping to grow in my faith through college. I know it’s a hard time for most people with college just because you’re really responsible for your faith, especially through the hard time that is college. And so I’m really hoping to grow deeper and have a better relationship with God through college and especially into my career and when I’m older, because I know it’ll be fundamental to life.”

Sierra, a senior at Russellville High School, said the award completely surprised him.

“I just thought being nominated for it was really neat,” he said with a laugh.

Sierra teaches students during parish religious education at his parish and is also active in youth groups at their sister parish, St. Augustine Church in Dardanelle. He’s also been a part of the diocese’s Youth Advisory Council and Search teams. When Sierra graduates in May, he will join the seminary as a diocesan seminarian.

“Now that I’m moving on to this next chapter in my life, my signing date is June 7 after the 5:30 Mass on Saturday,” he said. “I don’t know if anyone can truly prepare for that, but there’s a fun thrill in that, you know — not knowing what comes next, but knowing that the Lord is with you through it all.”