

The shot heard 'round the school: Spencer Costanzo '12 wins national photo contest, and PHS reaps the rewards

by Zaid Smart
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In celebration of Earth Day, search engine Bing.com held a national photo contest. Participants in the competition, separated into four age groups, entered photos that would inspire people to protect the earth.

Out of over 17,000 entries in the 14-17 age group, PHS sophomore Spencer Costanzo's shot took the first place spot. The photo, shot while Costanzo was vacationing in Puerto Rico, is of a large colorful Puerto Rican iguana.

Costanzo discovered the iguana while hiking through Caribbean island. "It quickly scurried up a tree, so I took out my camera and took some pictures," he said.

After learning about the photo contest online, Costanzo decided to enter his photo of the iguana. "The iguana was beautiful, and I guessed people would want to save it," said Costanzo.

Costanzo found the win surprising, but he was also very excited about it. "I wasn't expecting to win, not at all," he said. "It's amazing to be the best. And the prizes are amazing."

As part of winning first place, Costanzo received an HP computer and a trip to Seattle to meet the Bing editorial team.

Costanzo, however, is not the only beneficiary of his victory. As part of his prize, the PHS Photography Club, of which Costanzo is a co-president,



Sophomore Costanzo's winning photo from the Bing.com Earth Day photo contest.

photo by Spencer Costanzo

will receive twelve computers, three printers, and three cameras.

Costanzo believes the new lab could not have come at a better time, considering the economic situation the school district has found itself in after budget cuts around the state.

"The win gives us an opportunity to get a lab we would otherwise never get."

A lot of Costanzo's support came from his friends and family, and this support group was key to his win.

"I got a lot of support from everyone including my friends and family," said the sophomore.

"When the voting was open to the public, I

knew that many people at Princeton High were voting for me," evident in support on Facebook and in school.

After his win, Costanzo's fan base grew, evidenced by the recognition he received during the past few weeks.

"Everyone in school has been coming up to me to congratulate me," he said.

Although the win is Costanzo's first, this also happens to be his first time ever entering a photo contest.

But Costanzo's interest in photography goes back long before he was winning contests.

"I've always enjoyed taking pictures. In 7th grade, my par-

ents bought me my first camera, and I've been taking pictures ever since."

It is no coincidence that Costanzo's award winning photo is of an island dwelling iguana. He says his favorite things to photograph are landscapes and the unique creatures that inhabit them.

"All of my photos are taken outdoors. They are mostly nature photos."

With an array of wilderness trails and parks in the area, Princeton presents many spots to shoot Spencer's favorite shots

outdoors.

It sounds like an expensive hobby but Spencer has found a way to turn his hobby into a small business.

"I sell my photos and do montages for small events in order to buy new photography equipment," said Costanzo.

Spencer has brought his love of photography with him to PHS, helping found the Photography club along with sophomores Dan Black '12, and Caroline Bourscheid '12. This year they serve as presidents along with Henry Gray'10.

"The Photography Club is meant to help people expand their knowledge of photography and to increase their skills", said Costanzo.

Although the club took a break this year, with their new photography lab on the way Costanzo plans to meet much more often.

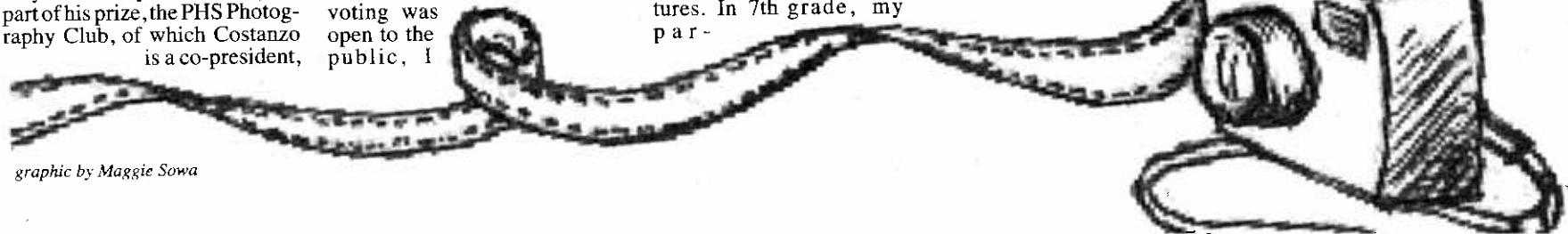
"We might meet twice a week," he said.

While some may end up rich and famous because of their photography, Costanzo views things on simpler terms.

"The best thing about being a photographer is that I can do something that I love to do, and make money from it!"

But in the end it all comes down to one thing for

Costanzo: "I find taking pictures a lot of fun!" □



graphic by Maggie Sowa