

eAchieve Academy student produces CD of original music



By Bill Kurtz

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Sage Leary's musical style might be summarized as "all of the above." Before his 15th birthday, the high school sophomore recorded his first CD of original music, "Feel the Sound," which he says incorporates elements of blues, rock, bluegrass acoustic instrumentals and more.

Leary is in his second year as a student at eAchieve Academy, a public online middle and high school operated by the Waukesha School District.

Much of his work writing and rehearsing the nine songs on "Feel the Sound" was done as part of his

fine arts independent study class at eAchieve.

"I started playing the guitar when I was 11, when my aunt bought me 10 lessons for my birthday," said Sage, who lives with his parents, Mark and Mary Leary, and a younger brother, Phoenix, in Holcombe, Wis., about 40 miles north of Eau Claire. Phoenix also attends eAchieve, as an eighth-grader. His parents operate a fundraising business from their home. Mark has some musical experience himself, having played trumpet and bass.

Sage said, "I get a lot of ideas from a lot of musicians, and I've devised my own style." He said blues would be his favorite musical style "if I had to choose one. It helps me express myself the best. I also like to listen to classic rock."

When asked for individual musicians he especially admires, Sage goes old school, reaching back to three classic guitarists. "Jimmy Page (of Led Zeppelin), Jimi Hendrix and Carlos Santana would be the top three," he said.

Sage's CD, which took eight months to complete, is available online at sageleary.com, and is sold at a handful of outlets in the Eau Claire area, where it was recorded. Sage helped his father produce the CD and has done live performances in the Eau Claire area. He has already done enough additional work to start a second album.


"I want to make people feel good, feel happy," he says. "I try to tell a story with each song. I'm really excited about this and hope people check it out online."

Sage said he plans to go to college, although he may not necessarily study music. Eventually he hopes to be a professional musician — preferably not as a backup.

"I want to be on the big stage, playing for a sea of people," he said matter-of-factly. "That would be awesome."




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