

## EYES ON THE SKY

Lots of kids like airplanes. But Ryan Ewing likes them more than most.

BY MAURA MAHONEY

**ASK RYAN EWING** to describe himself, and the freshman at The Heights School in Potomac will say, “I’m a normal teenager. I go to school, I wear braces—I just happen to have a thing for airplanes.” Does he ever. The Bethesda resident has about 40 airplane models, thousands of aviation photos and an aviation memorabilia collection that includes vintage and new airline magazines, vintage and new pins, “kiddie” plastic wings, and decks of airline playing cards.

Every Saturday, Ewing heads to Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, where he provides information to airline passengers as part of the Travelers Aid program there. At 15, he is the airport’s youngest Travelers Aid volunteer, and has amassed more than 200 hours with the program.

In February 2013, Ryan began an online publication called *Airline Geeks*, which covers topics such as airline safety, announcements of new airline routes, and airline industry trends, all written by Ryan and a team of young aviation enthusiasts from around the country. According to Ryan, the website has attracted as many as 50,000 monthly visitors, and has nearly 10,000 Twitter followers.

Ryan has taken a few flying lessons at Montgomery County Airpark in Gaithersburg, but a lack of free time (“I do have to go to school and do homework,” he says) and poor eyesight have forced him to channel his aviation passion into these projects and pastimes instead. Where did this obsession come from? Ryan’s not sure. “I didn’t catch the aviation bug,” he says. “I was born with it.”

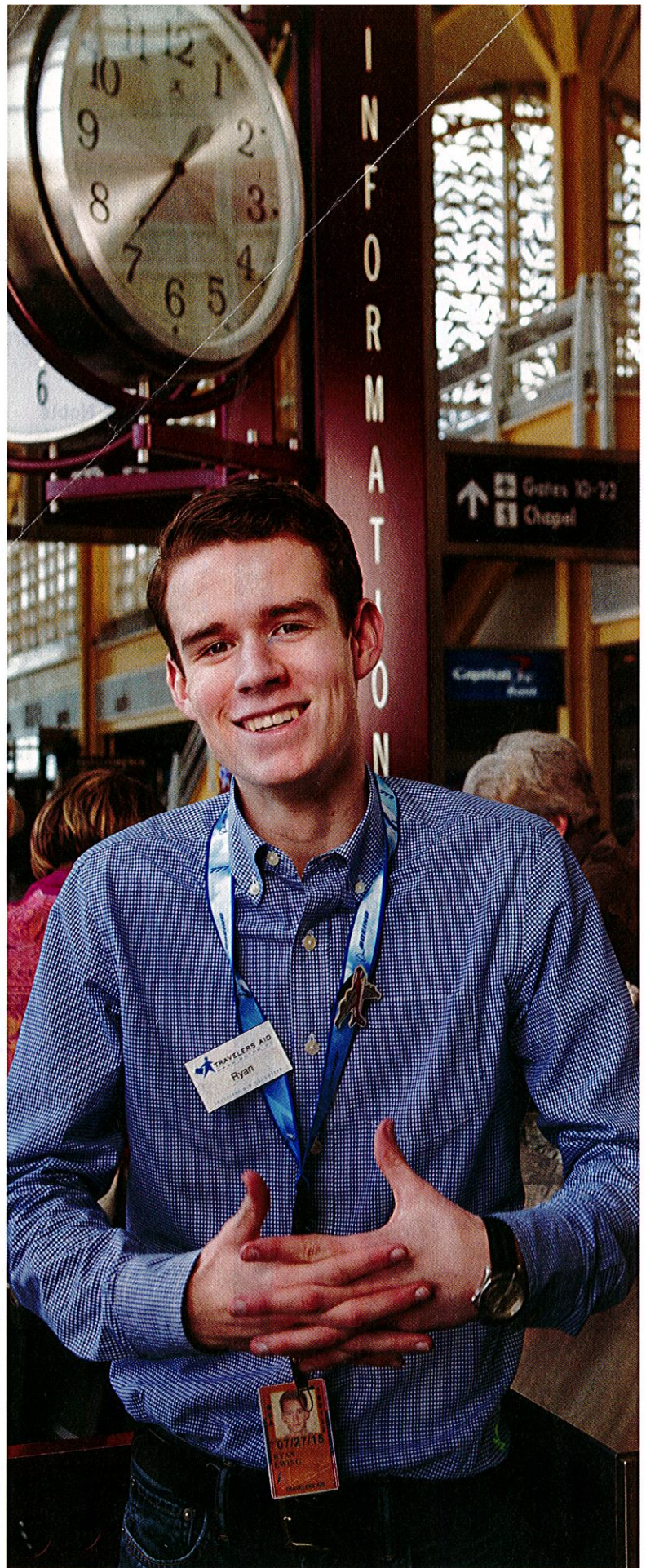


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