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## Hyde Park Violinist honored by national organization

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Staff Reporter

A spectacular local musician is garnering accolades at a shockingly young age.

Jason Tackie, a first grade student at the William Channing School, was one of 44 Project STEP music students to be honored with the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award.

A violinist, the Hyde Park resident first came on Project STEP's radar during a performance at a local church. Tackie was initially enrolled in the "FOCUS" program, which aims to introduce students from underrepresented communities to the study of music at a young age.

Of the roughly 80 students in the course, only four were admitted into Project STEP- Tackie was one of them.

"He showed remarkable musicality and interest," said Mary Jaffee, Project STEP's executive director. "He was then accepted into the core program of Project STEP."

When evaluated by staff members, Jaffee says instructors look for a certain set of skills, all of which Tackie demonstrated regularly.

"Generally what we look at is maturation," Jaffee said. "We want to see that, at age five, these kids



Jason Tackie, a first grade violinist at the Channing School, is a member of Project STEP.

COURTESY PHOTO

can focus and are ready to learn, that they have good pitch recognition and that they have good rhythm. Jason had all of that, he definitely displayed those strong characteristics."

As a whole, Project STEP was recognized for its rigorous, year-round classical string training program for under-represented minorities that invites them into a world of classical music that might not otherwise be available for them.

"Studying classical music teaches Project STEP students about discipline, commitment, analysis and attention to detail," Jaffee said. "They become astute citizens of the world. More than anything, it teaches them the joy and satisfaction that comes from hard

work and achievement."

As word of the recognition spread, Boston Mayor Marty Walsh chimed in to express his support for the program.

"I am extremely proud to see Project STEP receive the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award," Walsh said. "By targeting and serving populations that have been typically under-represented in classical music, Project STEP is evening the playing field, changing lives and showcasing the great talent of our children. I am thrilled to see them recognized on a national level and offer my sincerest congratulations and wishes for continued success."

For more information, visit [projectstep.org](http://projectstep.org).