



September 15, 2008

For Immediate Release

For More Information: Contact Allison Perz at 419-720-5200.

(Photo available upon request – send request email to: media@ohioschools.org)

Outstanding Toledo Teen Wins First-Ever Charter School Scholarship

\$10,000 award from University of Toledo and the Ohio Council of Community Schools

Toledo, Ohio - Meaghan DeRaedt, a Toledo student who has graduated from the Ohio Distance and Electronic Learning Academy (OHDELA), an online charter school served by the Ohio Council of Community Schools, was awarded the first-ever college scholarship from OCCS and the University of Toledo Monday.

The award was conferred at Monday's meeting of the OCCS board of directors, which was held at the Driscoll Alumni Center at the University of Toledo.

The scholarship, which is new this year, is jointly sponsored by OCCS and the University of Toledo. Miss DeRaedt is the first-ever recipient.

"I am very grateful to OCCS and the university for this great honor," Miss DeRaedt said. "Learning in a charter school environment has helped me a great deal because it taught me how to manage my time, prioritize my assignments, and how to take responsibility for my successes and my failures. Also, many of my college courses have used some form of online component. My classmates are sometimes confused by taking quizzes or submitting papers online. Such things don't phase me!"

"The biggest benefit I received from charter schools was the realization that I had a stake in my academic future," she said. "That fact should be painfully obvious, but far too often students, myself included, can view school as something that is forced upon them against their will. It is easy for students to view their education as a lifeless and finite duty, with the goal being to obtain some idea of standard body of knowledge. Charter schools gave me the chance and created a desire to explore knowledge past the pages of a textbook."

Meaghan began taking advanced college courses while still in high school, and was very successful. By the time she graduated from high school last spring, she enrolled at the University of Toledo as a Junior.



She is the oldest daughter of John and Stacia DeRaedt of Toledo. John DeRaedt owns two businesses, while Stacia takes care of Meaghan's seven brothers and sisters, six of whom are also enrolled in charter schools sponsored by OCCS.

"We chose to enroll our children in online charter schools because we liked the idea of parental involvement in the education process. We wanted to be a daily part of our children's education, but also receive the benefits provided by highly qualified teachers," said Stacia DeRaedt. "We wanted Meaghan, and all our children, to adhere to the same state mandated standards that traditional brick-and-mortar schools provided. The online charter school offerings from OCCS have met our needs and exceeded our expectations."

"We are very proud of Meaghan and wish her all the best in the future," said Allison Perz, executive director of OCCS. "She is a tremendous example of what students can do if they apply themselves to their school work. Her parents and the school officials did a tremendous job supporting her, and have helped her launch on a great trajectory no matter what she chooses to do in life. That is the purpose of education – and that is the purpose of OCCS."

###