

For Immediate Release:

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Student's Personal Project a Reason to Cheer

CORNING, NY – An East High School sophomore's Personal Project has very special meaning to her, and ultimately has made a positive difference in the lives of several high school girls. The C-PP Personal Project is the capstone experience of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP), which all students undertake in 10th grade. It is an opportunity for students to apply the skills they have developed throughout the MYP to investigate and create something related to a topic about which they are passionate. Each student chooses the project topic, and it doesn't have to be academic in nature. The Personal Project "product" is also completely the student's choice. They can write a report, prepare a PowerPoint® presentation, build a model or create a work of art. Because students design their own task according to their own personal interests, most find the Personal Project to be a fulfilling experience. That was definitely the case with fifteen-year-old Claudia Reed.

Claudia developed a project to provide a very special opportunity for some fellow high school students. Five students with special needs joined the Hawks Cheerleading squad to cheer during a boys varsity basketball game Friday, January 27th for the home crowd at West High. Claudia has a younger brother with special needs, and he was the inspiration for her project. Claudia said, "My little brother Max has autism. I see how there are not many opportunities for school involvement for great kids like him and I wanted to somehow make a difference for some kids with special needs. That's when I came up with the idea for the project." She added, "I also saw a similar experience for girls with special needs conducted in the Chicago area where I used to live. I always knew I wanted to get involved in something like that and the personal project was the perfect opportunity."

Claudia began cheerleading at the age of five, and it clearly is a passion for her. "Cheerleaders can be stereotyped," she said. "Cheerleading is what we do, not who we are. The sport requires dedication, hard work, hours and hours of practice, and a sense of team. We like to raise the spirit of others and not just during games."

Five girls responded to a flier Claudia made inviting them to practice and cheer for the game. Claudia said, "I was excited to see the response from the girls and their families. They all said they were excited about this and wanted to be part of it." The new additions to the team went through a series of practices with Claudia, learning some of the cheers and the movements that went with each specific cheer. She said, "The girls were so excited and it made me extremely happy to see them so happy! I would love to see this opportunity presented to the girls every year, not as someone's personal project, but just because it is a wonderful high school experience for both these girls and us varsity cheerleaders."

C-PP Director of Pupil Personnel Services Sarah Sorensen said, "Claudia is simply a wonderful student who has a great heart. She expressed the utmost care in seeing this project through and it made such an impact on the group of students." She



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added, “Claudia provided an opportunity for our students that they would never have otherwise had in their high school experience, and that is something of which she can be very proud.”

Claudia is an excellent student who enjoys math and English. She would like to pursue a career either as a dermatologist or a teacher. She said, “I do love working with kids and really think I might pursue teaching.” She added, “I really enjoyed teaching the girls the cheers and routines for this project. They are great girls and it was a lot of fun!”

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