

2017 PACTESP LIFE/WORK CHALLENGE AWARD RECIPIENT



Marissa Edwards is a second year student at the Mercer County Career Center where she is enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Program. She also attends Mercer Area High School. The Early Childhood Education classroom is very dynamic and fast paced because a dozen preschoolers attend for two hours a day, three days a week. Marissa is a stable force in the preschool room and reacts with a positive response when quick action is needed. She is thoughtful and deliberate when she is in the midst of daily work and consistently completes her work in a timely manner and to the best of her ability.

At the high school, she participates in a number of community events as a member of Students for Charity. At the career center, she is a recognized leader. She serves as an ambassador in her program when tours are being given in her shop and on the Center's Perkins Participating Planning Committee. Marissa is also a member of SkillsUSA and is able to contribute her ideas on how the organization should be run and helps plan the STRIVE (positive behavior support) activities at the school. Last year, Marissa participated in competitions at SkillsUSA, earning a bronze medal at the regional competition on the Quiz Bowl team and she has attended the SkillsUSA District Leadership conference in Erie.

Marissa was recently chosen to be inducted into the National Technical Honor Society at the career center, a reflection of her academic rigor, service, leadership and remarkable character. In her essay on why she wanted to join, Marissa wrote with clear expression stating, "I have accepted leadership in all of my volunteer experiences. I am in my second year of trying to be the best teacher that I can be while working with preschoolers three days a week. I studied diversity and multiculturalism in every aspect of Early Childhood Education. I volunteer often in my community. Becoming a member of the National Technical Honor Society will help me with my future plans of working with 3-5 year olds as an Early Childhood Professional." Marissa will be completing service projects with the group that includes a toy collection drive for Toys for Tots, and in the Spring, will be collecting food and household items for the Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County.

She has been selected for ROVA, the Rotary Club's Outstanding Vocational Award and has participated in the ROVA leadership camp developing teamwork, leadership and communication skills. She is also in Rotary 7280 Camp Kon-Knee activities.

Her nominator stated "Marissa is an extremely competent student whose activities in school and outside of school demonstrate her commitment to the field and her desire to teach children. She would be an asset to any employer. Marissa demonstrates many other qualities, such as honesty, integrity, motivation, a positive attitude and a desire to succeed that distinguish her from other individuals not only her age, but in her technical studies.

Marissa was nominated by Andrea Hoovler, Special Needs Support Staff Instructor, Mercer County Career Center.