



CARDINAL WATCH



Darby focused on community, giving back

By Winta Mebrahti
associate fuse editor

She knows nothing else than to be there. She is there for her sorority, for her community, for the ones whose lives have been affected by cancer and for anyone in need. Kelsey Darby is a Plattsburgh State student whose life is defined by giving to make people's lives easier. She is a student whose list of involvement is too long for a one-page resume.

Darby likes to plan her life. She plans for a life enriched with the joy of helping others. She first planned to attend PSUC as a journalism major, but changed her mind halfway through her high school graduation project, which was in journalism. She recognized the life of a journalist to be spontaneous — something that didn't fly with the young woman who had already planned her wedding day on Pinterest and knew the date of her first unborn child.

"You don't know what your day is going to look like from day to day, and I can't do that," Darby said.

Darby became an education program graduate student with a double major in

English language arts and English literature instead. She double majored in journalism and psychology. Darby is also the alumni relations chair at Theta Phi Alpha, member and former president of the Colleges Against Cancer, program coordinator at Project Help and former member of the Shine On! program.

The common denominator in these different roles is that they allow Darby to be the caring and selfless person her friends and co-workers say she is.

Darby's commitment to help extends beyond not only Plattsburgh's borders but also beyond the nation's border. Through the Alternative Spring Break program Darby has volunteered in Bridgeport, Connecticut, South Jersey and in a small town outside of Toronto.

Her choice of superpower tools: her planner.

"I have to have a planner because otherwise my life would be hectic," Darby said.

Darby's willingness to help stems from her childhood. Growing up in Williston, Vermont, being the twin daughter of a single mom who is always there for her family, friends and community inspired Darby to give back



Cardinal Points/Alex Ayala

If PSUC graduate student Kelsey Darby could relive her college years, she would be even more involved with clubs, such as the Autism Speaks Club. She would also not have left the planning committee of the suicide prevention club To Write Love On Her Arms.

to her community. Through Relay for Life, an annual fundraising event that helps communities across the globe fight back against cancer, Darby, her sister and her mother supported not only a family member — her grandmother was diagnosed with cancer — but also their community.

Darby continued supporting those whose lives were affected by cancer even after her enrollment in PSUC.

During her sophomore year, she joined Colleges Against Cancer, a nationwide organization that works to implement the missions of the American Cancer Society, and quickly became president of the organization.

"For half of the entire fall semester, it felt like I had no idea of what I was doing," Darby said. "I've never been in such a leadership role before and I've never worked

for the SA. I didn't know how any of it worked."

With help from the executive board of CAC, other clubs and the vice president, she got through that insecurity and led the organization successfully. For the second year in a row, the organization was awarded the Leader of Hope award, the highest award an individual CAC chapter can earn from the national CAC.

Darby's involvement has not gone unnoticed. Last year, she was awarded Who's Who Among Students, one of the most prestigious awards the academic community can

fine herself.

This is probably why Assistant Director of the Center for Student Involvement Michael Cashman, who is also her supervisor on Project Help, noticed a boost in her confidence since he first met her.

"She has always been, from my perspective, a pretty confident individual, but I think her self-confidence has grown," Cashman said.

Chair of Community Service at Theta Phi Alpha Emillie Provost said Darby is a loyal, organized and honest individual.

"She's just an amazing woman," Provost said.

So what does the future hold for the woman who has always planned her life and who has an abundance of collegiate experience?

"No doubt she will be one of those educators that will be looking at one of those future Disney's American Teacher of the Year Award, maybe a school supervisor," Cashman said. "In any case, whoever gets to work with her in the future is very fortunate."

To Darby, leaving the perfectly scheduled life and venturing in the uncertain future is "scary," there is one thing that will remain the same — she will always be there for everyone. Whether it is as a coach for a cross-country team, a club adviser or an animal shelter, "I can't imagine not being involved with the community," Darby said.

"Even if it is only once a

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