

Investing in the future

Student buys software with Challenge Program award money

When The Challenge Program Inc. awards a monetary incentive of \$250 to more than 850 high school students each year, we recognize the fact that the money will be spent in a number of different ways.

Unlike other scholarships awarded at the high-school level, The Challenge Program puts no restrictions on how its money should be spent by students.

We do not expect the award winners to report how they use their \$250, for we feel that students who have earned a bonus deserve to spend that bonus at their discretion.

However, we have found that many students like to report how they have spent their award money. Many report that they have put it in their college fund, some use it for summer trips and others use it as a monetary aid in their entrepreneurial endeavors.

Victoria Kissel, now a senior at Altoona Area High School, is one such entrepreneur.



THE CHALLENGE PROGRAM

Kayla Washko

In a thank-you letter she wrote to The Challenge Program after receiving her award for being the Most Improved student in the junior class last spring, Victoria indicated that she would be using her award money to buy computer software that will help her explore her interest in a career in computers.

Victoria said she could have used the money to explore a number of different fields related to computers.

But she ultimately decided to buy the software for Paint Shop Pro 9, which will allow her learn about the

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**VICTORIA KISSEL,
CHALLENGE PROGRAM
AWARD WINNER**

art of graphic and media designing.

Victoria has been diagnosed with a disability known as osteogenesis imperfecta, which means that her bones are very fragile and tend to break easily.

On a scale of 1 to 5, her condition has been rated a severity level of both a 1 and a 5, depending on which doctor she consults.

“Whichever one is worse, I have,” Victoria said.

Because of her condition, Victoria hopes to be self-employed after graduation, using her knowledge of graphic and media designing to edit photos and design Web sites for interested clients.

“The Challenge Program has benefited me by helping me get new design programs,” she said.

And these programs, of course, bring her one step closer to accomplishing her long-term goals.

This article is part of a human interest series that will feature past recipients of The Challenge Program's four award categories: Most improved, best grade-point average, most community service, and best attendance. The Challenge Program is a nonprofit organization located in Johnstown that provides financial incentives to students for successes they achieve while still in high school. The Challenge Program also aims to provide a bridge between high school students and the local business community.

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