

Program offers incentive for good grades

Abigail Hewitt, like most high-school students, knows that her junior year is "do or die."

That's because when high-school students apply to colleges in the fall of their senior years, admissions representatives base acceptance decisions on the grades students receive during their first three years of high school, often excluding marks from senior year.

"I knew I had to stay on top of my game this year," said Hewitt, a senior at Greater

Latrobe Senior High School.

"If I didn't stay focused and slacked off, my grades really could have gone either way."

At the beginning of the year, Hewitt was concerned about balancing her academically challenging course load, which consisted of three advanced placement classes, pre-calculus and physics.

The Challenge Program, she said, was the extra push she needed to stay focused.

"When the representatives from The Challenge Program visited our school (in the fall), I

was motivated to try my best," Hewitt said.

"I've always been driven to get good grades, but the program provided that extra incentive for me."

Ken Repak, personnel director for Idlewild & Soak Zone and business ambassador at Greater Latrobe High School, was one of the representatives in attendance at the orientation assembly that inspired Hewitt.

He said Hewitt's story is a testament as to why Idlewild supports the program.

"The Challenge Program gives students that extra motivation, and I think that's something we all need sometimes," Repak said. "We see this as a great opportunity for students to achieve academically as well as at work."

Hewitt's academic commitment resulted in a straight-A report card for the year and a \$250 check from The Challenge Program for Best G.P.A.-Junior at Greater Latrobe High School.

Next year, Hewitt plans to continue to challenge herself

academically by taking four AP classes and spending her remaining time studying with the Allied Health Program.

The semester-long program will provide a head start in studying medical-related professions and an opportunity to work within her community.

This article is part of a human interest series that features recipients of The Challenge Program's four award categories: Most Improved, Best G.P.A., Most Community Service and Best Attendance. The



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program is a nonprofit organization in Johnstown that provides financial incentives to students for successes they achieve while in high school. The program also aims to provide a bridge between high-school students and the local business community.

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Olympics may be costly for airlines

BY JULIE JOHNSON
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

CHICAGO - Olympics fans, it's not too late to jump on a jet to Beijing, provided you have a visa.

A check of reservations systems shows a glut of open seats on flights to China this week.

That may be great news for procrastinators and sports