



15-year-old earns three degrees before diploma



Rebecca Cain, who turns 16 next month, graduated from Copper Mountain College Friday with three associates degrees. She will receive her diploma from Yucca Valley High School next month.

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YUCCA VALLEY — Rebecca Cain has a powerful thirst for knowledge.

That she will receive her high school diploma before her 16th birthday is pretty amazing. That she received three associate degrees before she gets her high school diploma enters into the realm of stupendous.

Rebecca graduated from Copper Mountain College Friday with three Associate of Arts degrees in communications, English and liberal arts with an emphasis in arts and humanities with academic distinction honors of a 3.64 grade point average.

Rebecca started taking college classes on her 12th birthday at Copper Mountain College in the summer of 2006 with introductions to art and computer science. "After receiving A's in both classes, she was hooked," mother Christine remembers. "That fueled her desire to learn."

A full class load is typically 15 units per semester. For mere mortals, that is. Rebecca sidestepped the cap on maximum units per semester by enrolling concurrently at CMC, College of the Desert and online courses at Barstow City College, taking 27 units at CMC and COD combined.

"I'm very competitive," Rebecca explained. She learned of another local student who had received two associate degrees concurrently with her high school diploma and decided she had to surpass that accomplishment.

The academic phenomenon said she considers herself a normal kid just like everybody else, having enjoyed activities growing up like tae kwon do, wrestling, kendo, gymnastics, ballet, horseback riding, soccer, singing and playing piano as well as being on the high school's varsity cheer and swim teams.

Rebecca is an avid reader and music lover who just passed along her title of Miss Joshua Tree.

She has been a contributing writer for the Hi-Desert Star's Fresh Ink and served on the town's youth commission. She works part-time on the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps base as a lifeguard.

Rebecca has been accepted at more than one four-year university but hasn't yet made her final decision of where to go in the fall. She plans to major in business with a goal of obtaining her bachelor's degree by age 18, after which she plans to apply to the Air Force Officer Candidate School and work toward a Master of Business Administration and a juris doctor.

"I feel like the Air Force is best suited for me," Rebecca said.

In making the decision to move to Yucca Valley, Christine said, "We thought we might be somewhat stifled by a lack of cultural activities. We were wrong. This community has so much to offer for those who take advantage of the options."

Behind every successful student is a long line of caring educators and counselors. Rebecca and Christine credit La Contenta Middle School counselor Mike Goddard, Yucca Valley High School counselor Michelle MacLean and Copper Mountain College counselor Gregg Chesterman for their guidance and advice about Rebecca's academic career.

Additionally, mom and daughter gave shout-outs for YVHS principal Carl Phillips and Janie Ramstorf and Gregory Brown of CMC student services for their help.

Rebecca also jokingly thanked her sponsors, Mom's Taxi Service and Dad's Bank of Rebecca, "For their endless love and support for which I am grateful beyond words."