

Source: Courtney Weerts, cweerts@k-state.edu

Photo available: <http://www.k-state.edu/media/images/apr12/weerts.jpg>

News release prepared by: Rosie Hoefling, 785-532-2535, media@k-state.edu

Tuesday, April 10, 2012

SUCCESSFUL SERVICE: JUNIOR FROM OLATHE NAMED 2012 NEWMAN CIVIC FELLOW BY CAMPUS COMPACT

MANHATTAN -- Kansas State University's Courtney Weerts is receiving national recognition as an inspiring college student leader for her exemplary involvement in civic engagement.

Weerts, a junior in social work, **Olathe**, is one of 162 honorees from 32 states to be named a 2012 Newman Civic Fellow by Campus Compact. A national coalition of college and university presidents, Campus Compact is committed to fulfilling the civic purposes of higher education, specifically, improving community life and educating students in civic and social responsibility.

"It's a great honor to be named a Newman Civic Fellow," Weerts said. "Throughout my life, my parents taught me the importance of giving back to my community. Serving others in my community has shaped my life and has given me many great experiences."

Weerts was selected as a fellow for her work with the education of youth both inside and outside of the classroom. Specifically, she received recognition for her work as a coordinator with the academic mentoring program offered through the university's School of Leadership Studies. The program is a qualified community service federal work-study program.

In her role with the program, Weerts leads more than 30 academic mentors for K-12 youth. She also conducted an assessment of the program, participated in public forums on education and involved herself in the Kansas Mentors program to better serve the community.

Weerts has assisted in the development of a new community-based tutoring program and helped expand the capacity of seven area schools and two after-school programs as a result of her program improvements.

"My passion is helping others and that drives me to help get involved with my community," she said. "In order for our communities to be safe havens for their citizens, people have to be willing to step up and help make our communities great. I feel it is important for every citizen, no matter their age or stage in life, to take an interest in their community and find a way to make it a better place to live."

Weerts will join a network of Newman Civic Fellows around the country. They will share ideas and tools through online networking, helping the fellows leverage an even greater capacity for service and change as they continue to set examples for their classmates and others.

After graduating from the university, Weerts plans to become an autism specialist or work for a nonprofit agency that helps families in need.

Along with her service in the education system, Weerts volunteers as a team coordinator for Autism Speaks, is a basketball coach for the Manhattan Special Olympics and a leader with the Boy Scouts of America's Venturing Crew, a program that works to provide youth with leadership, service and social opportunities. She's also involved with the university's Wildcat Buddies program, which matches students with special needs individuals from Big Lakes Developmental Center.

A 2009 graduate of Olathe East High School, Weerts is the daughter of David and Linda Weerts.

#