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Southern Maine Community College Student Runner-up in New York Times Magazine Essay Contest

Student gives voice to the value of community college education

South Portland -- Liz Addison, a student at Southern Maine Community College, has been named one of five finalists in a national essay contest sponsored by the New York Times Sunday Magazine. A biology major with a goal of becoming a large animal veterinarian, Addison was one of some 600 college students to submit an original essay in response to “What’s the Matter With College,” an essay by historian Rick Perlstein.

In her essay, “Two Years Are Better Than Four,” Addison writes: “The philosophy of the community college...is one that unconditionally allows its students to begin. Just begin. Implicit in this belief is the understanding that anything and everything is possible.” Community colleges are, she writes, “America’s hidden public service gem.”

Addison, who is 38, left school at 16 and began working in the horse racing industry. Recently, she earned her GED. After completing a year of study at Piedmont Virginia Community College, she moved to Maine and enrolled at Southern Maine Community College. A resident of Portland, she is on course to graduate from SMCC in the Spring of 2008 with plans to complete her bachelor’s degree at the University of Southern Maine and then enroll in veterinary school.

In deciding to enroll in community college, Addison thought she would study nursing. It was only as the college experience unfolded that she realized it was possible to reach towards veterinary medicine—“a personal wish of mine,” she explains, “that I had thought was lost to me.”

Her essay—along with those by Richard Perlstein and the other four finalists—can be read at <http://essay.blogs.nytimes.com/>.

Southern Maine Community College empowers students to respond to a changing world and enhances economic and cultural development in Southern Maine by providing a variety of educational opportunities and partnerships.

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