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STUDENT FINDS OPPORTUNITY IN MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

Athletic Training Major Prepares Students for Service

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Erika Spudie has spent the last five months on a big stage. Spudie, a senior student from Perrysburg, Ohio, began work with the Columbus Crew, a professional soccer team which competes in Major League Soccer (MLS), in July and concluded her time there at the end of November.

Cedarville's athletic training program works with the Crew to provide the team with interns and this year Spudie was selected for the honor. After interviewing and completing the hiring process, Spudie was selected for the internship and began work with the Crew. Spudie's internship with the Crew is a unique one, one of 60 offered across MLS, which is based in the United States and Canada.

Spudie is involved with all facets of the athletic health care for the team. Her time with the Crew is split up in a variety of areas including: injury evaluation, treatment, rehabilitation, strength and conditioning components, and diet and nutrition.

She arrives in the morning and helps prepare the team's facilities for practice, which could include anything from arranging taping stations to filling water bottles to readying hot tubs. Once the players arrive, she helps the team's two athletic trainers with pregame treatments, taping, rehab and any injury evaluations. During practice, Spudie works with the Crew staff to treat injuries and work through any necessary rehabilitation protocols.

On such a big stage, Spudie said she is thankful for an experience like this one. "Getting to know the players on the team has been such a benefit to having a major league internship such as this one," she said. "The guys on the team have been so respectful and have created an environment conducive to learning."

The nature of the work allows athletic trainers to spend a lot of time with those they are treating. As such, it is easy to form relationships with the athletes. Spudie's favorite part of her work was the daily contact and relationship-building with the athletes she served.

"Having such a consistent relationship is really important for building rapport, and it's an aspect of the profession I enjoy," she said. One way she did so was by teaching herself Spanish during her two-hour commute so she could better communicate with some of the Latin American players on the team.

"This has strengthened my relationships with some of them, which has really blessed me in ways they don't even realize," she said.

Where do students like Spudie get this heart for relationships and personal caring for those they are serving? Mike Weller, assistant professor of athletic training and program director for the athletic training education program (ATEP) at Cedarville University, is just one of the sources. Cedarville University athletic training faculty hope to instill in their students this desire to serve.

"If we don't show them the ministry opportunities in athletic training, then we're doing a disservice to our students," Weller said.

Weller's heart for ministry opportunities through athletic training is evident in his own life as well: "I've done this for a long time and at a lot of places and this is an opportunity that I don't want our students to miss."

The Cedarville University athletic training major is preparing its students for serving both the body and the spirit. "Most of the athletic training students across the country are learning the same

curriculum,” Weller said. “They’re getting the same kind of information. But there is a distinction among Cedarville grads: they’re making a lasting impact.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University attracts 3,400 undergraduate, graduate and online students to more than 100 areas of study. Celebrating 125 years of inspiring greatness, Cedarville is a Christ-centered learning community recognized nationally for rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. Visit the University online at www.cedarville.edu.