Servant Leader
Danielle Patton, an incoming first-year student, believes when you take something, you should give something back to balance the equation.

Call it the math version of the Bible's lesson that to whom much is given, much is required.

Serving others is a driving force in Patton's life and now has netted her a $40,000 scholarship, awarded as $10,000 over four years, as the winner of a University of Dayton contest that invited prospective students to create a video describing what servant leadership means to them.

(Watch the top three videos at the related link)

"God has given me so many abilities and gifts, I have a responsibility to use them to help others," Patton said. "The University of Dayton is giving me $40,000 for college. That's huge! It gives me even more motivation to pay back that kindness by helping others in need."

In her video, Patton interviewed several members of her community in Avon Lake, Ohio, on the west side of Cleveland. After hearing from a variety of voices, including a doctor, classmates, a judge and a firefighter, Patton concluded that "it's not important how you choose to serve, but it's imperative that you do choose to serve."

Contest judges agreed this closing statement and her combination of perspectives made her video stand out. Many of them said they believe she exemplifies the University's focus on servant leadership and would excel as part of the University community.

It's a community Patton, a senior at Avon Lake High School planning to enroll as a pre-physical therapy major, can't wait to join.

"During my campus visits, everyone seemed so comfortable, like they are a big family," Patton said. "And their focus on educating the whole person, rather than just emphasizing an academic degree, and opportunities for service really attracted me to the University."

Sydney Antolini of Huntersville, N.C., and Meg Butz of Hawthorn Woods, Ill. received second- and third-place scholarships of $6,000 and $4,000 respectively.

The contest received contributions from 52 prospective students, with more than 57,000 votes cast. Half of the contestants opted to have their video accepted in lieu of a traditional written essay as part of their application.
The contest, now in its second year, is both a nod to the way the YouTube generation communicates and a novel opportunity for prospective students to stand out from thousands of other applicants.

Entrants shared their videos through Facebook, Twitter, email or word of mouth to drum up votes. A panel of judges reviewed the 10 videos with the most votes to select the winners.

"This is a way for prospective students to promote themselves to us by portraying themselves in the most creative way possible," said Kevin Schultz, assistant director of University marketing and digital innovation. "This contest also helps prospective students understand the University of Dayton is a Catholic, Marianist school, and we're serious about servant-leadership. It's one of the tenets of what makes the University of Dayton special."

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