Youth of the Year has ‘heart to serve’

Editor’s note: The Courier-Tribune’s popular “Trailblazer” feature showcases the positive things young people are doing. If you know someone who fits that description, email name, phone number/email address and a brief description of accomplishments to ajordan@courier-tribune.com.

By Terrence Jefferies
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TRINITY — Meredith Cunha, a senior at Wheatmore High School, was recently recognized with the Youth of the Year Award at the 2019 Archdale-Trinity Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner.

“I was trying to keep my composure, trying not to cry,” she said when asked about her first thoughts when she heard her name called. “I thought to myself, out of all the people, they decided to choose me.”

The prestigious honor recognized Cunha for her many achievements — in academics, athletics and community service.

In academics, she enjoys a 4.296 GPA while maintaining an active schedule. On the athletic field, Cunha was a member of the Junior Varsity volleyball team in her freshman and sophomore years. She ran cross country during her junior and senior years.

Her extracurricular activities have included being a member of the Beta Club, the National Technical Honor Society, HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) and the Fellowship of Christian Students. She also founded the Poetry Club at Wheatmore, her junior year.

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“I’ve (also) been involved in HRA (Human Rights Advocates) for the last two years and was inducted into the National Society for High School Scholars (NHSBS), last year,” she added. With a heart to serve and go the extra mile, it’s no surprise that Cunha is heavily involved in mission work at her local church. Her volunteer work varies, but includes participating in the youth group, a ministry to children, teenagers and young adults, at Faith Baptist Church in Trinity. The participants help with Father’s Storehouse Ministries in Thomasville and take part in summer mission weeks at Fort Caswell in Oak Island. “At Camp Caswell, there is a number of activities you may participate in. There are activities with children. You can help out local firefighters and police officers,” she explained. According to Father’s Storehouse Ministries’ website, the nonprofit mission church aims to bridge the gap of families in need.”

“I’ve received really cool experiences with that. … I think God has given me this gift to have a compassion for other people and to be able to help others,” she added, about the most rewarding part of her faith. “I feel so fulfilled. I always have this undeniable happiness that never goes away. It’s such an amazing feeling. … I’m a really compassionate person, and I’ve always known that God was going to call me to do something (great) with people,” she said.

Cunha’s future ambitions reflect that caring. She has been accepted into the University of North Carolina at Wilmington where she plans to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree and becomes a Registered Nurse. She may follow that with a master’s degree as a Family Nurse Practitioner. “I’m ready for the next step in my life. I’m also ready to meet new people, to have new experiences and to have other opportunities to serve,” she said. Cunha is the daughter of Elizabeth and David Cunha. Her sister, Morgan, is a sophomore at Wheatmore High School.

“...to bridge the gap of families in need.”

Meredith Cunha packs cereal for those in need at Father’s Storehouse Ministries with her youth group.

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