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BOZEMAN, Mont. -- **Bobcat Cheerleader Makes Community Service a Priority** -- Kelsey Edinger knows how to set priorities. She has to. As a senior in exercise science, a Bobcat cheerleader, and an active volunteer in the Bozeman community, her days hum with activity.

Edinger is the recent recipient of the 2009 Montana State Female Athlete in Service Award presented each year by Campus Contact at the Cat-Griz football game. Men's basketball player Cody Anderson was the men's recipient.

Edinger is a Billings Senior alumni and is thankful for her family and her Montana roots.

"Being close to my family has always been important to me and I've always liked Bozeman," she said. "Academics are real important to me as well and I think MSU is a good fit that way. I'm the first person in my family to go to college and my younger sister goes here now as well." Edinger's younger sister, Kylie, is a member of the Bobcat volleyball team.

Edinger's commitment to community involvement is what keeps her engine going.

"My love for volunteering actually started with cheerleading when I was younger," she said. "I got involved in projects that my team did, or things I would do on my own and just learned to really like it. I just kind of took off on my own."

Edinger likes the variety available with volunteer work. She likes to get involved in projects, currently being involved in Toys for Tots, transcribing notes for disabled students, and volunteering at the Livingston hospital.

"I like to pop in where I am needed. It's fun just talking to people and getting involved in a bunch of different things," she said.

Edinger got involved in the Bobcat Athletics A.L.L. Challenge reading to elementary students. The A.L.L. Challenge is a department-wide program that helps student-athletes, staff and coaches get involved in community service projects in the Bozeman area.

"It started off as just reading to some second grade kids and then the teacher moved me to working with students with learning disabilities, and that was really fun," Edinger said.

When asked how she balances school, cheerleading and community service, she wasn't shy about talking about the challenge.

"It's really hard, but I'm just extremely driven," she said. "I make a lot of lists. I look forward to what's ahead and pick what's important. Sometimes I can't do everything and communication is huge—talking to professors and coaches and asking them to help with out with time conflicts. It's worked because I'm a senior and happy to be graduating in four years."

What keeps her motivated?

“I suppose this sounds corny, but I like the feeling of knowing I actually did something,” she said. “The community supports us in everything we do and just to be able to give back without being asked and to brighten someone’s day. When I go to the nursing home, they get so excited just because you’re there. I mean, that’s easy to do and it really makes a difference.”

The bottom line for Edinger is simple: “Just being able to say I helped a little. That keeps me going.”