



2009 Scholarship Recipients



Alissa Kitchen

ISI skating holds many happy memories and lessons for Alissa (“Ali”) Kitchen, from the dozens of shows and competitions in which she has skated individually, in Spotlight events with family and friends and on synchro teams, to her recent roles as instructor, judge and mentor.

“My long relationship with ISI naturally makes me an advocate for ISI,” says Ali, a 14-year ISI member who has entered as many as 11 events in a single competition. “I am proud to teach every skater about ISI. My dream is to share my love for skating, the lessons skating has taught me and the friendships that have blessed my life. I want to be the one to guide them toward what has enriched my life so deeply, and teach them that skating is for fun.”

Ali’s cheerful personality, sunny smile and contagious enthusiasm are welcome additions wherever she skates and studies. She regularly traveled two hours twice weekly from her home in Columbia, Mo. to skate with her synchro team at Webster Groves Ice Arena in the St. Louis area.

“Alissa’s love for skating is infectious and she brightens the rink when she’s there,” notes her coach, Bridgid LaMear. “Her positive nature and love for children go hand-in-hand. Ali not only strives for excellence, but achieves it. She isn’t satisfied with ‘good enough’ but truly takes the extra steps needed to be the best at whatever her task. She is an ISI skater through and through who brings joy to our next generation of skaters.”

Ali graduated in the top 5 percent of her class at Rock Bridge Senior High School in Columbia, Mo., where she was active in myriad academic and community activities. She is now a freshman at Miami University in Ohio, where she is majoring in biology and U.S. history, with a minor in Spanish. The campus is home to the new Goggin Ice Center and its world-renowned varsity synchronized skating team.



Briana Pigott

Briana Pigott is a classic example of the ISI “skating scholar” who has successfully balanced her life both on and off the ice.

“I have worked hard all my life to balance the demands of school and skating. It took a lot of work to find this very delicate balance, especially once I entered high school,” says Briana, who credits her parents’ love and support for helping her achieve that balance.

“My mom would wake up early every Saturday morning to bring me to my group lessons, and my dad would always leave work early to come see me compete or perform. I was the main contributor to the wear and tear on the family car, with all the trips to the rink for practice and the countless road trips to competitions. Sacrifices were very often made on my parents’ part so I could stick with the sport that was bringing me so much happiness,” Briana adds.

Thanks to her parents’ commitment as well as Briana’s own dedication, she is an 11-year ISI member who has participated in an impressive seven World Recreational Team Championships, coast to coast, and dozens of other local and regional events while maintaining a stellar record in the classroom and as a busy volunteer.

“As a skater, Briana gives 100 percent every time she steps onto the ice,” says Lisa Hasgrove, Briana’s understudy program director at the Edward J. Murray Memorial Skating Center in Yonkers, N.Y. “As a competitor, she is strong and determined. As a volunteer, she is caring and reliable. She has spent countless hours, year after year, helping to improve our skating school. Briana has also made our entire community proud with her accomplishments outside the rink.”

As a student at Dominican Academy, Briana received awards in a full spectrum of academic subjects, including English, geometry, biology, literature, algebra and trigonometry, chemistry, history, Spanish, religion, physics and pre-calculus.

Her efforts have been rewarded with acceptance into Yale University, where she is majoring in political science with a focus on international relations.



Theresa Semmelmayr

Skating, says Theresa Semmelmayr, has given her strength, agility, flexibility, endurance, athleticism and a strong work ethic. It was the endurance she gained through skating that inspired her to run high school cross-country and contribute to her team's district, sectional and state performances.

Skating also has promoted Theresa's healthy lifestyle, energy, artistic expression, sportsmanship and volunteer spirit. But most of all, she notes, it has broadened her circle of friends.

"My world is so immense because I skate," Theresa says. "I have been all over the nation competing, from Colorado to Connecticut, meeting many skaters and experiencing new things. My favorite thing, by far, about skating is sharing it with others. I love teaching tots how to skate, volunteering at the ice rink with friends and performing in front of an audience in a show or competition."

Theresa is a Freestyle 9 skater with her sights set on Freestyle 10.

"I have been coaching Theresa for 10 years now, and I know that wherever life takes her she will be successful. She has become confident off the ice and one of the best performers on the ice that our skating school has known," says Pam Forster, Theresa's coach at St. Peters Rec-Plex in St. Peters, Mo. "She has always been the most involved skater in our rink's program, no matter the events. She is always there to lend a helping hand and she is a great role model."

Theresa graduated second in her class of 483 from Francis Howell Central High School in nearby St. Charles, with a grade point average of 4.81 on a 4.0 (weighted) scale. She is majoring in mechanical engineering at St. Louis University.

"I have taken what I learned from skating about accepting and applying criticism and have used it in my academics, my social interactions — and beyond," says Theresa. "I consider it my responsibility as a high-level ISI skater to provide an example of hard work and sportsmanship. I believe the joy of skating should be shared with all I encounter."