

[Greater Madison]

Greater Madison scholarships

Community organization helps local students

Greater Madison awarded six local high-school seniors with \$2,000 scholarships for the 2010–11 academic year. The community organization chose one winner from each area high school in addition to two at-large recipients.

Scholarships were offered to Drake Cary (Harrisonburg High School), Shvan Kareem (Harrisonburg High School), Amy Leeth (Turner Ashby High School), Elizabeth Reut (Spotswood High School), Shana Sherman (Broadway High School) and Rachel Smith (Broadway High School). The Greater Madison scholarship committee selected the recipients based on academic achievement and commitment to community involvement. “We saw so many terrific applicants who were actively involved in the community. We’re thrilled to help out local kids who are committed to their communities,” says Greater Madison president James R. Sipe Jr.

Greater Madison was established in 1971 to advance a mutually beneficial relationship between JMU and the Harrisonburg and Rockingham County community. 



JMU officials honored Greater Madison Scholarship winners like Drake Cary and Rachel Smith at their high schools.



[Engaging Education]

Fuzzy friends and Emmy nods

Alumna leads cast of characters to make children’s education engaging

BY SARA RIDDLE ('10)

Christina Delfico ('87) had two dreams growing up: to live in New York City and to work in television or film. During a trip to New York as a child, she remembers looking out from the back seat of the car at the thousands of people on the sidewalks of 42nd Street. “I literally looked at each person and made a secret promise that I would see them later when I grew up and moved to New York,” she says.

Following graduation, Delfico packed her belongings, said her farewells to Northern Virginia, and headed toward the Big Apple. “I figured if the TV thing didn’t work out I would at least be in one of the greatest cities in the world,” she says.

Fortunately for her, both dreams came true.

Now at work in the city of her dreams, Delfico doesn’t spend her days in a conference room or behind a desk. Instead, she takes part in music recording sessions with Elmo and friends.

Delfico is vice president and producer for Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind *Sesame Street*. She is responsible for producing television specials, live concerts and community outreach initiatives with both domestic and international reach. She “conducts an orchestra of people who come together to create a show from the story concept to final delivery,” she says. Delfico is the driving force behind several primetime family specials including, Emmy-nominated *When Families Grieve*, and *Coming Home: Military Families Cope with Change* and *Families Stand Together: Feeling Secure in Tough Times*.

Delfico credits her double major in communication arts and psychology as a “tremendous asset” for her career. Her communication arts skills help her find story angles, write scripts, and learn the basics of camera work, editing and music. Psychology knowledge helps her lead a multitude of personalities, including artists, musicians, accountants and network executives.



Christina Delfico ('87) spends her days as vice president of Sesame Workshop surrounded by fuzzy friends who help her educate children on a variety of topics.

Delfico has worked with many media stars like Katie Couric, Queen Latifah, John Mayer, Al Roker, Cuba Gooding Jr. and Vanessa Williams.

Originally, Delfico came to JMU to study biol-

ogy. Her love for watching shows featuring the late oceanographer Jacques Cousteau aided her decision. However, a class on testing the behavior of rats as they learned to navigate through a maze for food soon changed her

mind. “I thought to myself, ‘I don’t actually have to be a scientist to learn about the world,’” she says. “When I was deciding what to be, my main fascination with Jacques Cousteau was that he was always exploring. Now, every day, I am exploring.”

Delfico returned to campus to give the keynote address at the School of Media Arts and Design’s spring conference. She shared her experiences working with Cuba Gooding Jr. on the set of *When Parents Are Deployed*, a show on the importance of communication when parents who serve in the military are away for long periods of time. “He really understood what we were trying to do and mentioned that even though he is not getting shot at when he is doing a movie, he really feels the distance from his family,” she says.

This primetime special and Delfico’s work with Katie Couric on *When Families Grieve* both earned Emmy nominations. “It is a real honor when your industry peers vote for your work,” she says.  * Learn more at www.sesameworkshop.org/newsandevent.

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— CHRISTINA DELFICO ('87)