

### March 17, 2016 – SCS Tip Sheet

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#### LEE STUDENT NAMED NATIONAL MERIT FINALIST

**Staunton, VA** - Emma Diduch, a senior at Robert E. Lee High School, has been named a National Merit Finalist. Emma made application for this honor by submitting her SAT scores, along with a personal essay and recommendations from members of the Robert E. Lee High School faculty. This distinction is extremely competitive as Emma makes up a small percentage of applicants to be named as a Finalist.

Dr. Mark Rowicki, Principal of Robert E. Lee High School, commented, “Emma being named a National Merit Finalist is not a surprise to me. The late General Norman Schwarzkopf once said ‘*The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing it.*’ For Emma, doing the right thing is the norm and her ethics and integrity are above contestation. Emma Diduch is a wonderful young lady who epitomizes the phrase ‘best-of-the-best’, and I am very proud to have known her throughout her high school years.” During her time as a student at Robert E. Lee High School, Emma has been actively involved in various extra-curricular and co-curricular activities, including: marching band where she has played the marimba and the piccolo, and most recently has served as the drum major; symphonic band where she played the flute and the piccolo; the Lee Academic Team for four years during which the team won two conference championships; and the tennis team for three years. She has also been a participant in the orchestra for various Lee High musicals as well as productions by ShenanArts and Shenandoah Valley Governor’s School (SVGS). Part of her school day is spent at SVGS where she is a student in the regional STEM program. Heather Durham, English teacher at Lee commented about her student, “Emma is driven by her desire of knowledge not her desire for grades. She is a well-rounded, quiet leader. She is content to let others shine but willing to help as she is needed.”

Outside of her busy school and extra-curricular schedule, Emma still finds time to volunteer as an interpreter at the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton. “Even while I’ve participated in a lot of activities at Lee, my teachers, directors, and coaches have reinforced the principle that academics come first. Having that encouragement and understanding has allowed me to balance challenging and enriching classes at Lee and Governor’s school with extracurricular activities,” added Emma. This fall, Emma will be attending the College of William and Mary where she plans to major in biology and history.

Winners of Merit Scholarship® awards are chosen from the Finalist group based on their abilities, skills, and accomplishments. Notifications of these awards will be made in the spring.



Emma Diduch, Senior at Robert E. Lee High School has been named as a National Merit Finalist.

### SPRING PLAY IS A FAMILY PRODUCTION

The Lee Drama Department's spring musical presentation of Disney's, *The Little Mermaid*, is scheduled to open this week and has turned out to be quite the SCS family production. This year's play is unique in a couple of ways -- one being that students from all SCS schools are included in the production, and the other being that the play has a number of sibling groups and family connections amongst the cast and crew lists.

Based on the Broadway musical, the play includes more songs and dancing than what is found in the well-known movie. Since this lends well to a cast and crew of different age groups, the production was opened to other Staunton City Schools' students. A notice was sent out in January inviting younger students to join the fun, with the understanding that there is a significant time commitment for practices and dress rehearsals. The response was tremendous. A total of 43 preschool, elementary and middle school students came on board to make a full cast and crew count of more than 100 members. "They have all worked exceptionally hard to make this a great production," said Melissa Maynard, Director.

When the cast and crew selection was complete, the list included an astounding number of family connections, including: 19 sets of siblings, one family of five, one mother and son, and one grandmother and grandson. Whether making magic happen on stage or behind the scenes, all of these family connections have made for fun and exciting practices and rehearsals. The cast and crew invite everyone to come join in the adventures and be a part of that world under the sea, at Lee! The play opens on Friday, March 18 at 7:30 p.m., with repeat performances on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for students, with free admission to kids ages 5 and under.



The cast of *The Little Mermaid* enjoy practicing one of the many musical numbers.

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