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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Runner With Spinal Cord Injury Receives Scholarship**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- How does a former cheerleader and runner, and current nursing student at Cedarville University, end up with a scholarship from a former swimmer at the University of Southern California (USC)? They both learned to overcome their physical challenges to pursue their dreams.

This summer, freshman nursing student Abigail Curtis received the 2018 Swim With Mike Scholarship, a scholarship fund for physically challenged athletes. The organization, established in 1981 by Mike Nyeholt, provides funds “for physically challenged athletes to overcome their tragedies and realize their full potential.”

Nyeholt was an all-American swimmer who graduated from USC in 1978 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration and finance. In 1981, he became paralyzed after breaking his neck in a motorcycle accident. This inspired him to create “Swim With Mike,” a nonprofit organization that provides scholarships for students with similar injuries. Nyeholt’s foundation has supported 231 college scholarships to date.

As a child, Curtis had several athletic ambitions — cheerleading, soccer, gymnastics and running. She participated in these sports until a severe spinal injury in 2012, when she was 12, changed the trajectory of her athletic future. “I was no longer able to participate in the sports that I loved,” said Curtis. “I wanted to continue with athletics because I loved being part of a team and the camaraderie.”

She pursued her passion by managing her high school cross country team and even participating in the 400-meter race on the track and field team at Jefferson Forest High School in Forest, Virginia.

After graduation, Curtis dreamed of attending college to study nursing and eventually become a nurse practitioner. However, due to the expense of frequent physical therapy and doctor’s appointments, she began to lose hope. Curtis wondered how she would overcome the obstacle of finances.

During a checkup in May 2018, one doctor suggested Curtis apply for the Swim With Mike Scholarship and provided a letter of recommendation. After an intensive application and selection process, she received news she was chosen for the scholarship, totaling \$6,000 per semester for four years. Curtis chose to use her scholarship at Cedarville University.

“I am extremely grateful that I am one of the scholarship recipients,” said Curtis. “The scholarship helped me to make my dream of attending college a reality.”

Her faith has played a significant part in her journey. “When I was overcoming my disability, the verses ‘Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you’ (Heb. 13:5) and ‘Cast all your anxiety on him because he

cares for you' (1 Pet. 5:7) helped me get through it," Curtis shared. "Although it was very difficult, I knew that God was with me through it all."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit [www.cedarville.edu](http://www.cedarville.edu).