

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Reviving an Endangered Indigenous Language**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- The language we speak helps define who we are, but some are losing this part of their identity as their language ceases to be passed to future generations and speakers shift to a more sociopolitically dominant language.

To support these threatened languages, Cedarville University linguistics students will join Dr. Kate Riestenberg, a postdoctoral fellow at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, as she works with community members to revitalize the Sierra Juárez Zapotec language of Oaxaca, Mexico.

“Valuing a language shows that one also values that culture and its people,” explained Mary Ann Rouland, a Cedarville University junior from Saratoga, California, who helped with the Zapotec project last summer. Rouland is majoring in linguistics.

Riestenberg works closely with community members in Oaxaca, recording language lessons that are given to Spanish-speaking children who are learning Zapotec as a heritage language, and then transcribing and annotating the videos for analysis.

The Cedarville students participating this summer will ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions in Zapotec and translations into Spanish. This year’s students include sophomores Emily Walker from Carroll, Ohio, and Lindsey Bishop from Findlay, Ohio.

Rouland credits her experience with the Zapotec project for her desire to continue to pursue revitalizing language in her advanced studies and career.

“The same summer I was working on the Zapotec project, I went on a missions trip to a Native American reservation on Puget Sound in Washington and ended up writing my sociolinguistics paper on their language,” explained Rouland. “Their language is technically extinct, but tribes are doing amazing work to revitalize it.”

“The Zapotec project is definitely a valuable experience for the future,” noted Walker. “I get to explore another facet of linguistics, and it’s amazing to know that what I’ll be doing has a small part to play in further documenting and revitalizing Zapotec.”

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).