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## **Ask for Help: Legally Blind Social Work Major Seeks to Serve**

**CEDARVILLE, OHIO** -- Social work majors seek to bear others' emotional burdens, but for sophomore Hannah Abel, she has an added difficulty to navigate: her sight. Diagnosed with Stargardt's at the age of 9 and pronounced legally blind, Abel refused to let it stop her from pursuing her dreams.

Stargardt's is a juvenile form of macular degeneration that causes the retina to deteriorate. "I can see better out of my peripheral vision, but it is still difficult to do all the normal things a person could," said Abel. "People think glasses fix it, but they just make things slightly less blurry."

Growing up, Abel, from Cedarville, Ohio, pushed herself to excel along with her classmates. Her sweet disposition and can-do attitude propelled her to graduate from high school and pursue her bachelor's degree in social work at Cedarville University.

Abel's heart to work with victims of domestic violence stemmed from her love for others and desire to play a part in remedying what she saw as a very broken system. "I want to tangibly help these people get out of difficult situations, whether that be at a shelter or in a counseling or therapeutic setting," she said.

Abel was met with incredible people and accommodations during her time at Cedar Cliff Elementary School and Cedar Cliff High School, and this has continued at Cedarville University. "I hate asking for help because I like to be independent," she said. "But throughout my whole life, I've had to learn that asking for help is not weakness. Asking for help is showing the strength that you're willing to humble yourself and say that you cannot do it alone."

"In domestic violence situations, people are often afraid to ask for help because it becomes a bigger problem and goes to the authorities, causing there to be legal implications," Abel continued. "But there is strength in asking for help, and I seek to carry that message into the social work field in the future."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,550 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including its [Bachelor of Science in Social Work program](#), strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit [www.cedarville.edu](http://www.cedarville.edu).

By Brianna Coffey