

For immediate release

News from the University of Southern Indiana

Gibson County student to earn teaching degree this spring

Alison K. Wilzbacher of Gibson County will graduate cum laude from the University of Southern Indiana this spring with a baccalaureate degree in elementary education. She will be one of 1,291 members of the USI Class of 2007 to graduate May 5 at Roberts Stadium in Evansville.

A graduate of Gibson Southern High School, Wilzbacher served as a student ambassador for the USI Office of Admission, working as a guide during the USI visit days called Southern Hospitality Days. She met prospective students and parents and offered a student's view of the University.

She was active in College Mentors for Kids, a program that pairs at-risk, first-through-fourth graders with a USI student mentor for weekly activities focused on higher education and career, culture and diversity, and community service.

Wilzbacher was named to Kappa Delta Pi, an honor society in the field of education, and she served as secretary for the USI chapter. She also was a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, the nation's premier honor organization for high-achieving students.

As part of her academic program, she is getting a reading endorsement. The extra classes for this endorsement offer strategies to help struggling readers. "I'm willing to listen and give students my full attention," she said.

"The best part of teaching is to see in their eyes that the students understand the material. They are proud of themselves."

Her student teaching assignments were at Scott Elementary School and Cedar Hall Elementary School.

Michael Slavkin, USI associate professor of education, said, "Alison is a dynamic, critical student who thinks about how she can make a difference in the lives of her students. Her work with Habitat for Humanity and on peer mentoring projects has helped her to recognize that teachers can actively organize change in their students' lives. She considers herself to be an active force in making a difference in the lives of others. We need more of this in our teachers today."

She is the daughter of Phillip and Katie Wilzbacher. Her grandfather Don Sheridan was a math teacher at Rex Mundi High School and Mater Dei High School, and she has an aunt who has a teaching degree.