

## FAU High 2009 Commencement Profile

*Christina Antoinietta Zarrilli*

Christina Zarrilli, 17, is a member of Florida Atlantic University High School's (FAU High) class of 2009. Home-schooled prior to attending FAU High as a ninth grader, the Boca Raton native was in search of a different high school experience. FAU High's more mature learning environment, flexible scheduling and opportunity to enroll in college classes early in her high school experience were reasons she chose to attend the school. She dove in head first, taking an entire course load of college courses during her high school freshman year. Although she found the experience challenging, she was willing to take the risk to help reach her goal of becoming an astronaut. That risk so far has paid off, as Zarrilli will be graduating high school earning 109 of the 120 college credits needed for a college degree.

Zarrilli said that she feels her education is much more than coursework. While at FAU High, she attended university symposiums, colloquiums, seminars, plays, concerts and demonstrations, and volunteered with FAU's Office for Students with Disabilities.

"FAU's diverse student population gave me an opportunity to work on class projects and make friends with people from many different cultures and backgrounds," Zarrilli said. "At FAU High, I got to take introductory classes earlier which helps you decide on a major. My biggest challenge was adjusting to class sizes of up to 300 after being homeschooled in a classroom of one."

In addition to her heavy academic schedule, Zarrilli works part-time, dances with a ballet company, serves as a lector at her church, and plays and referees sports. She was recognized by FAU President Frank T. Brogan in his 2008-09 State of the University address for her commitment to community service. She has provided more than 4,000 hours to activities involving disaster relief, search and rescue, senior citizen aid, veteran and soldier support and youth mentoring. Zarrilli also received a Prudential Spirit of Community award and Presidential Community Service awards in gold, silver and bronze for her volunteerism.

Zarrilli has received acceptance letters from the University of Miami and the Florida Institute of Technology, but plans to continue her college education at FAU, pursuing a major in ocean engineering. She was nominated to FAU's College of Engineering and Computer Science Innovation Leadership Honors program and received Best Paper Awards from the College for her writings on ocean engineering and nanotechnology. In addition to a Bright Futures scholarship, Zarrilli also received \$21,000 in scholarships including an award by the Civil Air Patrol for flight training.

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