

# Mesa teacher-to-be wins car, ditches scooter

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(Photo: Alexa D'Angelo/ The Republic)

Veronica Daigle was planning to ride her red Romeo 150 scooter the 144 miles from Phoenix to Flagstaff but figured she'd take a chance by entering a contest that came with the possibility of a free car.

Daigle, 24, penned an essay as part of the contest entry that caught the eye of a Tempe mechanic who was running the contest. As much as Daigle's outlook and academic achievements impressed Glen Hayward, it was the prospect of the Mesa Community College student traversing Interstate 17 on a scooter that pushed her entry over the top.

"I couldn't picture anyone making the drive on those hills with a scooter," said Hayward, owner of Good Works Auto Repair near 24th Street and Broadway Road in Tempe.

Hayward, who also sits on the Neighborhood Auto Repair Professionals' (NARPRO) board, said that the company originally wanted to give the car to someone who was already a teacher, but they decided it would be better to give it to someone about to go into the educational field, Hayward said.

"She was the president of the future teacher education board," said Hayward, elaborating on what separated Daigle from the other entrants.

"Furthermore, she said in her essay that she would be going up to Flagstaff this summer and she only had a scooter."

Daigle received the keys to her red, refurbished 1996 Ford Taurus at a ceremony Monday morning as part of the NARPRO "Teacher To Be" essay contest. The giveaway is part of NARPRO's "Ten Acts of Kindness" program, in celebration of their 10 years of service in the Valley, said Charlotte Shaff, a spokeswoman for the group.

"Thank you so much," Daigle said. "This is awesome, I can't believe I'm the lucky winner."

Daigle, who started school at Mesa Community College after completing a year at the Disney World college programs, said she will be teaching Native American high school students at Northern Arizona University this summer after her graduation Friday. She also said she will be attending Arizona State University in the fall to continue her schooling.

Daigle, in addition to the shiny red vehicle, was given an emergency kit from her car, an Arizona State University bumper sticker and a sun shade for her new ride. Hayward also said he filled the tank with gas and would give her free oil changes for a year.

Daigle said the car would give her the opportunity to teach for two more years with Teach For America, and would prevent her from not having a vehicle while in Flagstaff this summer.

"I'll be able to go to work and school without having to worry about being stranded if my scooter breaks down," Daigle said. "This will make it much easier for me to get to the schools I am servicing."

Daigle didn't stop smiling throughout the entire morning, but the thing that excited her most was the panic button on her new set of keys.

"It has a panic button," Daigle said laughing. "I can panic. Panicking on the scooter was mostly me screaming a lot."

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