

## **Stockton Graduate Receives 2015 New Jersey Distinguished Student Teacher Award**

Kaitlyn Odgers of Barnegat to Receive Honor on June 24

***For Immediate Release; Kaitlyn Odgers photo attached***

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**Galloway Township, NJ** – Kaitlyn Odgers of Barnegat, N.J., a December 2014 graduate of Stockton University's Education and Psychology programs, will receive one of this year's New Jersey Distinguished Student Teacher Award, which recognizes the top 15 graduates of teacher education programs throughout the state. Odgers was selected out of 44 nominees from 22 colleges and universities.

Amber Johnston of Marmora in Upper Township, N.J., a 2015 graduate of Stockton's Education and Literature programs, was also nominated for the award.

The New Jersey Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (NJACTE) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will host an awards ceremony honoring the winners and nominees on **June 24 at 5 p.m.** at the Yvonne Theater at Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ.

Odgers spent the Fall 2014 semester student-teaching in the Stafford Township School District in Ocean County.

"I am so honored to be receiving the 2015 New Jersey Distinguished Student Teacher Award," Odgers said. "I would like to thank Stockton's Teacher Education program for preparing me for a successful student teaching semester. I would also like to thank the Stafford Township School District for giving me the opportunity to gain valuable experience in the classroom. I am looking forward to starting my career as a fifth grade teacher at the Robert L. Horbelt Elementary School in Barnegat in September."

Odgers worked alongside cooperating kindergarten teacher, Roxanne Callahan, at the Primary Learning Center in Manahawkin.

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“I realized almost immediately that Kaitlyn was going to be a great student teacher,” said Callahan, who will also be honored at the June 24 awards ceremony. “Within a few weeks, I had to change my initial opinion – she wasn’t going to be great, but extraordinary! To watch her teaching was inspiring. Her excitement and love of education was contagious.”

A cooperating teacher is the licensed, master teacher who shares his or her classroom with a student teacher for the semester, explained Dr. Claudine Keenan, dean of Education at Stockton. Co-ops mentor and oversee the candidate’s work with their students.

“As the cooperating teacher it is my job to give guidance to student teachers,” said Callahan. “Kaitlyn made that very easy. She reminded me every day why I chose to be a teacher. The students in my class and I will always remember the time we had with Miss O., and the joy she brought to learning.”

“Both of our nominees have completed very successful student teaching experiences, and we are exceedingly proud of our winner in the statewide final selection,” said Dean Keenan. “Kaitlyn, Amber, and all of this year’s winners are excellent representatives of the talent and achievement potential among our future teachers.”

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